



Yet UNCOMMON!

FOR SOME WISE CAUSE,

'It is the little things that rule this Life;'

OR, IN OTHER WORDS:-

'Sow an Act, and you Reap a Habit; Sow a Habit, and you Reap a Character; Sow a Character, and you Reap a Destiny!'—THACKERAY.

'And such is human life, so gliding on; It glimmers like a meteor, and is gone!'

MORAL:-

'In Life's Play the Player of the other side is Hidden from us. We know that his play is Always Fair, Just, and Patient, but we also know to our Cost that He Never Overlooks a Mistake. It's for you to find out WHY YOUR EARS ARE BOXED.

HOW TO AVOID THE INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF STIMULANTS.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF LIVING—partaking of too rich foods, as pastry, saccharine, and fatty substances, alcoholic drinks, and an insufficient amount of exercise—frequently deranges the liver. I would advise all bilious people, unless they are careful to keep the liver acting freely, to exercise great care in the use of alcoholic drinks; avoid sugar, and always dilute largely with water. Experience shows that porter, mild ales, port wine, dark sherries, sweet champagne, liqueurs, and brandies are all very apt to disagree; while light white wines, and gin or old whisky largely diluted with pure mineral water charged only with natural gas, will be found the least objectionable. ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' is PECULIARLY ADAPTED for any CONSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESS of the LIVER; it possesses the power of reparation when digestion has been disturbed or lost, and PLACES the INVALID on the RIGHT TRACK to HEALTH. A world of woes is avoided by those who keep and use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Therefore NO FAMILY SHOULD EVER BE WITHOUT IT.

TNO'S 'FRUIT SALT' assists the functions of the LIVER, BOWELS, SKIN, and KIDNEYS by Natural Means; thus the blood is freed from POISONOUS or other HURTFUL MATTERS, the Foundation and GREAT DANGER of CHILLS, FEVERS, WORRY, BLOOD POISONS, &c. It is impossible to overstate its great value.

The value of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' cannot be told.
Its success in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand proves it.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT where it has been taken in the earliest stages of a disease, it has, in innumerable instances, PREVENTED what would otherwise have been a SERIOUS ILLNESS. The effect of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' upon a disordered and feverish condition of the system is MARVELLOUS.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'PRUIT SALT.' Without it, you have been imposed on by a WORTHLESS and occasionally poisonous imitation. PREPARED ONLY AT

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' Works, London, S.E., by J. C. Eno's Patent.





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By HENRY SETON MERRIMAN.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

HARRY was for the moment taken aback, and stood dumb before the jury he had himself selected to hear his case. He was by nature hasty, fiery, and honest. It had ever been with him the habit to give voice to the thought so soon as ever this came to his brain. Concealment was as repugnant to his soul as it was impossible to his countenance. A hasty judgment, a quick word, a sudden repentance, and a broken resolution had, alas! been his method of procedure through life. The hidden thought, the slow, snake-like motive were not his, and he could scarce believe them in another. A fair fight of any sort exhilarated him, but an underhand pass with illegitimate blade made a coward of him. He was afraid now, and he showed it. A wave of doubt swept across the faces before him as the shadow of a cloud across a fair field on a breezy day. Harry Wylam afraid? They had never conceived the thought; and the fact was before them.

'He cannot deny it,' repeated Phillip Lamond.

'No, but others can!' said a voice behind, and all eyes were fixed on Frederic Marqueray.

'You!' retorted Lamond as quick as thought. 'You are the

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principal witness. You were there disguised as a fakir. You are the principal witness, my fine young gentleman.'

'Who saw nothing,' said Marqueray, quietly, 'for you had knocked me senseless with a slash over the head—from behind.'

Lamond paused for a moment. This was a foe of different metal. 'My evidence would be quite enough to convict him,' he said

easily.
'Your evidence?'

'Yes, my evidence.'

Marqueray came a little nearer. His long narrow face, drawn into furrows by the enormous fatigues of a terrible campaign, twitched nervously—the only sign he ever gave of anger.

'You will be out of India long before that,' he said evenly. 'If you are a wise man you will be out of India to-morrow morning.'

Lamond was looking at him with a sudden narrowing of his gaze. Some, who had seen a tiger spring, caught their breath. Marqueray's eyes never left his adversary's face, while he took a paper from his pocket and unfolded it. It was a piece of native-made paper, and the soft, clothy sound of it was the only break to a deathly silence.

Marqueray held it up in front of Lamond's face. He said some words quickly in a low voice in the Tamil tongue, and Phillip Lamond drew in a sharp, choking breath.

'Keep your hands from your pockets,' said Frederic Marqueray, who knew murder in the eyes when he saw it, 'and go.'

As Phillip Lamond moved towards the door, Marqueray turned on his heel, facing him as a crab faces danger, and watched the slim clenched hands.

The door was slowly opened. Lamond paused for a moment with his fingers on the handle, his foot on the threshold, his back turned towards the room full of men. He paused as if in thought. Then he went on, closing the door behind him. He had played his last card in a long game.

'Poor devil!' said a voice with a queer break in it. It was

the voice of Harry Wylam.

The end of the scene had been so sudden, so unexpected, so astonishingly dramatic, that for a few moments the slow-minded Englishmen left standing in the large room were speechless and, it seemed, deprived of the power of thought.

The first to speak was a general officer—a white-haired veteran—who, like Marqueray, was versed in many Indian tongues.

He pushed his way forward.

'Marqueray,' he said in an authoritative voice, 'what did you say to that man? I think I have a right to know.'

At all events he had a right to ask, though Marqueray in his discretion would rather have answered the question elsewhere.

Before replying he moved towards the door, where he stood almost in the position which he had held during the dispute.

'I told him,' he said, 'that he was a spy. I showed him a plan of the Ridge batteries supplied by him to the mutineers inside Delhi.'

There was, as the speaker had anticipated, a roar of rage, and many of the younger men made a rush towards the door. But he stood barring it with his outstretched arms. He was their superior officer. None but the general could dispute his word, and that officer perhaps knew better.

'No,' cried Marqueray, 'let him go. We cannot prove it. I have been trying to do so for months.'

They fell back, some murmuring discontentedly, others aghast with surprise and a sort of shame.

'Remember,' said Marqueray, striking the note with a sure touch, 'that he is an Englishman. None know it except ourselves, and we had better forget it.'

'And what about the men who bought him?' cried one passionately. 'What about the mutineers inside Delhi who were in communication with Lamond, and knew him to be an Englishman?'

'I know who they were. They showed me the papers themselves, and I stole one of them,' replied the man who had staked his life for his country's cause. The paper was in his pocket, and many would have liked to see it. But he never raised a hand to satisfy their curiosity.

'But the men have only to produce the rest of the papers and to say whence they got them, and all the world will know,' cried the first speaker angrily. It was not one man's reputation only that was at stake, but the good name of a whole race.

'They will never do that. We killed them all in Delhi—Wylam and I and two troopers. Forty of them.'

A silence followed this plain statement. And, perchance, some in that room recognised what manner of man stood before them. Some, perhaps, caught a glimpse in that drawn and stern face of a whole suppressed record of deeds conceived in cold blood, and carried out with an intrepidity such as is vouchsafed to few. Some, it may be, guessed in part the sacrifice that Frederic Marqueray had made when he barred the door behind Phillip Lamond. For

the sake of Englishmen he had connived at the escape of one who would have dragged the good name in the lowest depths of treachery and degradation. And, in suppressing the deeds of Phillip Lamond, he had deliberately struck his own name out of history. The good and the evil of the great unstoried intrigues in and around Delhi were so commingled that, if Marqueray had given to the world a record of his adventures—as many at this time were engaged in doing—he must have told the shameful story of Phillip Lamond also. Instead, he was content that his contemporaries and brother officers should know him as a good soldier only, and that history should never tell of a marvellous feat. He threw the good that he had wrought into the balance over against Phillip Lamond's evil deeds, and was content to go his own way, bearing in his silent heart the knowledge that he was a greater than many whose names then were, and are to this day, a pleasant household word for bravery, and the admiration of every English schoolboy.

'I do not see,' said one of the younger men, 'how you can fail to prove that he did it. You have the paper. I suppose you can

prove that it is his handwriting.'

'Yes—but we cannot prove that he drew up the plans with the view of selling them to the mutineers,' replied Marqueray. 'We cannot meet his defence that the papers were stolen from him by a native servant. He was an accredited guide to the force before Delhi. He had a perfect right to have the plans in his possession.'

Marqueray moved away from the door. He knew enough, no doubt, of Phillip Lamond, to entrust that gentleman's safety to his own care after the lapse of fifteen minutes, which grace he had

now accorded him.

In replying to the arguments put forth by the younger and hot-headed members, Marqueray displayed no desire to close the question. Rather, indeed, was his manner that of one desirous of giving every information. Nothing arouses curiosity so quickly as the obvious desire to conceal. He moved towards the chair, which he had lately vacated, and there sat down.

'Then,' said the officer, whose perception was keener than his discretion, 'how was it you frightened him so confoundedly?'

'Oh, he thought I could prove it.'

'Bluff?' inquired the sceptic, with a smile full of mutual understanding.

'Bluff,' replied the man, who had been inside Delhi—looking steadily and, as some thought, coldly at his interlocutor.

He took up a pen and wrote something on a large sheet of the

club-paper. No one had left the room. Some sat down, but the majority formed themselves into groups and stood discussing this event in whispers. The scratching of Marqueray's pen continued. A member looked at the clock and went to the door, turning the handle and rattling it impatiently.

'This door is locked,' he cried. 'Where the devil is the key?'

'In my pocket,' said Marqueray, turning in his chair. 'I propose that we all sign this paper before any one leaves the room. General, will you lead off?'

The general took the sheet of foolscap, and read it with a gleam

in his fierce old eyes.

'Certainly,' he said. 'D-n it, sir-certainly.'

He took a quill and splashed his name down on the paper, and a great name it was. The others followed suit, as behoved men accustomed to discipline, and thus the undertaking was signed that none should divulge Phillip Lamond's secret.

Harry put his name to the paper the last but one; immediately, in fact, over the signature of his good angel. And the scrawl, a great bold flourish, beneath the name of Harry Wylam, touched the top of the capital letters of a neat and compressed 'Frederic

Marqueray.'

The two friends stood side by side for a moment while Marqueray laid the blotting-paper upon the writing with a steady hand. Harry gave a gulp. There were a thousand things he wished to say to the man who seemed to be ever by his side when needed. A hundred fair resolutions rose in his mind, and he wanted to tell Marqueray that his good offices had not been thrown away upon an unworthy object, but on one who intended to lead a new life. But Marqueray, always a little stern and cold, did not invite such protestations by his demeanour. Indeed, his own life had been marked and shaped more by deeds than words, and it is probable that he failed in part to understand Harry's impulsive nature—capable enough of good, but sorely susceptible to the influence of the passing moment, which is rarely for good and usually takes its clue from the faultiness of our poor nature.

So Harry moved away with the rest, and Marqueray folding the paper tucked it into the front of his tunic. He handed the key to the young fellow who had wished to have it, and the doors being thrown open many went about their business, a prey to that passing emotion which is all we can give to our

neighbours' affairs.

Harry sat despondently down at a table littered with news-

papers, and dragging a journal towards him set his elbows upon it with a reckless vehemence, as if determined to throw his whole

mind into the perusal of the news.

He sat there, turning his back upon the room, in dogged silence, and read no word of the print before him. His eyes were dull with a heavy despair, his chin thrust forward in mute defiance of fate. Indeed, the worst seemed to have happened to him. Whichever way he turned disgrace awaited him.

One by one the members got up and, with some explanatory word, delivered in a tone of forced indifference to whoever happened to be near, left the room. One was going to dinner; another was engaged to dine with friends, and must repair to his

quarters to dress.

Harry knew where Marqueray was sitting. He heard that chair pushed back, and its late occupant walk slowly from the room. He raised his haggard face from his hand and listened. Marqueray had gone without a word. This was the sorest blow. His last friend—the man who had stood by him through thick and thin (and in truth the thick had outweighed the thin in Harry's life), his good angel—had gone with the others.

The clock over the door struck seven. It was long after the hour at which men dined in those days. Harry could not have eaten a morsel, but the temptation to drink was upon him. Perhaps he could gather his wits with the help of a stimulant, and think what must be done. He did not know that Marqueray was waiting at the foot of the stairs, having foreseen this danger.

Harry turned and looked over his shoulder. He was alone in the room with one man—the general who had forced Marqueray to speak. This was Harry's general, the commandant of the force

in Calcutta.

The old gentleman was reading a newspaper with marked attention.

Harry rose and moved unsteadily towards the door, and the newspaper was laid aside.

'Wylam.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I must ask you,' said the general, 'to consider yourself under arrest. When you have dined please go to your quarters.'

Harry stood for a moment. The words did not seem to reach his understanding at once. He looked at the general, who avoided meeting the glance. Then he walked slowly from the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FLIGHT.

PHILLIP LAMOND walked down the broad stairs of the club which had been his haunt for years with composure and a face that was almost serene. Indeed, the servants—who disliked him for a meanness which is commoner than we suspect—noticed nothing.

A wise man conscious of the seed of sudden death in his constitution is often brave enough to make quiet preparations for his departure, so arranging his affairs that he may undertake at a moment's notice and without indecent haste the long journey that must inevitably come.

It is probable that Phillip Lamond, conscious of the instability of his foothold upon the slippery incline of Calcutta society, had foreseen the moment when he would fall. Nay, further; it is probable that in some subtle way he may have been allowed to distinguish, by one of those flashes of foresight which we can only call instinct, the man who was destined at last to trip him up. In his dealings with Marqueray he had always lacked nerve. In the valley between the Ridge and the walls of Delhi he had trembled in the presence of the fakir, whom he would have killed had Harry Wylam not prevented him. Among our heartstrings there is one which is only touched by one or two friends and one or two foes. Lamond had always been conscious of a thrill of misgiving when in the presence of Frederic Marqueray. There was no feeling of surprise in his mind now. It all seemed natural and pre-ordained.

But he was shaken. He was almost sixty years of age; and a great anger or a heavy fall is dangerous after fifty. His hands were shaking, and he thrust them into the pockets of the loose jacket that he always wore. He walked rapidly and rather unsteadily out of the club compound, where it was dark, into the dusty street, now crowded with baboos and their clerks hurrying home from shop and office. The light of the street lamps or the glare of a shop-window fell on a face that was aged and worn. He hurried on into the smaller streets, and presently entered the house of a native forwarding agent.

It is notable that in his strait this Englishman went to one who was not of his race.

The night was dark, with a strong breeze that hummed and moaned through the rigging of the ships lying in the river as Phillip Lamond stepped into his boat ten minutes later. He aroused the boatmen with a sharp word, and took his seat on the luxurious cushion amidships. The four rowers were in the bows; the steersmen, lost in the darkness, crouched in the stern. There had been rain up-country, and the river was full. The babble of the water round the mooring chains of the vessels at anchor in the stream told that this was unusually rapid. Lamond, who knew every humour of the great sacred river, who had passed up and down its treacherous waters almost daily for forty years, unlaced his boots. It is said that he who falls into the Hooghly never rises to the surface again, but Lamond had twice swum to the dreary mud-steeped banks—leaving his boatmen, by the bye, to drown.

Once out into the stream he bade the oarsmen bend to their work, but these hesitated, and the steersman humbly remonstrated. The night was dark and stormy. It would be impossible to discern other craft at anchor or moving, though of the latter there would scarce be many abroad at such a time. A collision must inevitably mean death. In reply, Phillip Lamond took the steering oar, and sent the pilot into the bows to keep watch there. Thus the little boat sped down stream at a terrific pace. Every moment was a distinct gain; for nothing could follow them at such a speed, and the road to Garden Reach was in those days sandy, uneven, and unfit for rapid travelling.

Phillip Lamond seemed to know that Marqueray had given him until the morning to make his escape, and of Harry he had no fear. For Harry had proved himself to be as clay in the potter's hands during these last years of gradual degradation.

The steersman brought the boat to a standstill, swinging skilfully in mid-stream, not at the bungalow steps, but across the river at a landing not far removed from the furnished house where Maria awaited her husband's return to dinner.

She was in evening dress, her beautiful white arms gleaming through the delicate muslin, for she never knew when Harry might bring some friend to dine. They had begun their married life, observing the little formalities and customs of their station, both scrupulously donning full dress for their tête-à-tête evening meal. But of late this excellent practice, serving to maintain a self and mutual respect, as well as to guard intact the barrier of position, had been neglected.

Maria rose from her chair, and looked at her father with a sort of hardness about her lips, which might have indicated anxiety in a softer face.

'Harry?' she exclaimed in a low, interrogative voice.

'No, there is nothing wrong with Harry,' replied Lamond, closing the door carefully. 'But,' he turned and showed her a face that had grown suddenly old, 'it is all up with me.'

'What do you mean?' asked Maria, who was calm and collected enough at this juncture. Indeed, her manner was rather that of

a man than of a helpless woman.

'I have been accused of selling information to the mutineers.'

'A spy,' said Maria.

And her father was silent.

'Of course you are innocent,' she said, tossing her head so that the diamonds at her throat (which had never been paid for) glittered in the lamplight.

'Keep your d-d scorn for your husband!' said the fond

father.

And Maria knew that he was guilty.

'What does it mean?' she asked. 'What will happen?'

She had risen, white-faced but quite collected; ready for an emergency—her father's daughter.

'God knows,' he answered. 'I mustn't wait to see. If it had not been for Marqueray they would have torn me to pieces.'

He laughed—a scaffold laugh.

'Who found out?'

Lamond did not answer. He had not played a dangerous game all his life without learning a greater wisdom than that.

'Who accused you?' amended Maria.

'Marqueray.'

He repeated the name with something like wonder in his voice, and Maria looked at him. She was a woman, and had not yet parted with the conviction that she could have made Frederic Marqueray love her.

'That is not all,' said her father, looking worn and

broken.

Maria waited in a suspense which she held in control with a fine nerve.

'Harry has found out about the money. He met Sajin of Delhi by accident at a money-lender's, and the—the fat was in the fire.'

Lamond, it will be perceived, did not pause to choose his

language. There may be honour in certain circles, but there is not always a great refinement of speech.

'But it is settled on me,' cried Maria in a strident voice, a

sudden fear in her eyes.

'Yes,' answered her father, with something very like a sneer. And they looked into each other's faces. This was triumph; this, success. Success is the hammer with which we strike the world, and find it hollow.

For years these two had striven to gain that which was now theirs. Lamond had perhaps little to lose, but he had risked that little for the attainment of this end. He had brought Maria up from girlhood to seek the same goal. Fresh from school she had come out to him, and he had taught her that money was the end and aim of human endeavour. She had proved an apt pupil, and the slowly laid seed had borne fruit.

Lamond was of too refined a nature to lay his scheme before her in its crude form. He had hinted here, had half exposed a motive there, and Maria understood. The vilest conspirators are those who dare not even shape their plot in words.

These two were too clever to fail, and in the hour of their triumph they stood facing each other with white faces and drawn eyes.

'What is to be done?' said Maria. 'We cannot stay here.'

'No; we must go down to-night to Diamond Harbour, where I have ascertained that there are outward-bound vessels at anchor. Marqueray gave me till to-morrow morning.'

The name made Maria wince.

She, too, had risked something in the great venture—that which women risk, nay, throw away, when they marry for any other motive than love.

'Where shall you go?' she asked.

'I do not know yet,' replied the father, with his old leisureliness of manner, which his astute daughter probably recognised as a mere trick. 'The Old World will be too hot for me if this comes out, and Harry is dangerous. I shall probably try the Pacific slope. You had better go to Ceylon, and there await developments.'

'And the child?' asked Maria, stooping to pick up her lace pocket-handkerchief. She need scarcely have taken the precaution, for her father did not look at her.

'Oh, stick to that. It will strengthen your position. But

they cannot rob you of the money. That is square enough. I have seen to that, Maria. And I know my way about.'

He gave a little laugh, rather short and hard for a laugh of

triumph.

'Galle,' he said, 'Galle is the place for you. Pretty little place. Healthy enough. Nice sea-breezes. The—er—child mustn't die. I have friends in Galle who will show you the ropes.'

'Yes, but a friend of yours might show me the wrong ones,'

said the lady who had made herself a position.

Lamond took the filial snub easily enough. He had a special smile for snubs, well known in Calcutta. He reflected for a moment, standing by the open window.

'Yes,' he admitted, quite without rancour. 'Perhaps you had better say nothing about me. Husband on active service. Calcutta

not good for the-er-child. Something of that sort.'

With a wave of his small white hand he indicated what seemed to be a triumphal ascent for Maria, from one position to another in the years to come.

'But I should live at Galle, at any rate for a bit,' he added gravely. It is marvellous how the shady people of the world know

where to find the shady spots.

'Will you be ready in an hour?' he continued. 'Get a bit of dinner and pack your things. Bring the ayah. Tell her there is cholera, or anything. I've got some things to attend to across at

the bungalow. Will be back in an hour with the boat.'

Maria, who was as good a campaigner as her father (having no doubt inherited the capacity from the gentleman who had been on active service in life's battle ever since his boyhood), lost no time in repining, but whipped the fittest of her trousseau into one box, and the best of the wedding presents into another. She knew that the luggage-carrying capacities of a Hooghly boat were limited, and wisely abandoned the plated articles.

'They'll go towards the rent,' she reflected, remembering Harry's impecunious condition and the last quarter's arrears.

A tiny trunk took all the infant's small belongings, and that diminutive traveller was dragged rather hastily from her bed to be dressed without resistance, and half asleep in the complete abandonment of childhood. Verily the second and the third generation are called upon to pay. This infant's first journey was a flight.

The embarkation was safely effected about ten o'clock, at which hour Harry had not yet returned home. Lamond arrived with

the boat and two men to carry Maria's luggage. These individuals he introduced by the drawing-room window, which stood open, and the whole party quiety evacuated by that exit. A waning moon was just rising through the smoke of the great city which had known Lamond's footfall these thirty years, and was never to know it more.

The river was running as rapidly as earlier in the evening, but its face was now lighter, and the dark forms of vessels moored by either bank were easily distinguishable. The rowers took their places, and the steersman gave the word of departure. There was, Lamond had commanded, to be no singing. He sat down by Maria in the stern of the boat, while the ayah carrying her charge crouched at their feet.

The boat shot out into mid-stream, where the current caught it and whirled it swiftly and silently towards the sea. Thus Phillip Lamond departed from the scene of his long and fruitful labours.

They reached Diamond Harbour without accident, and crept quietly alongside a steamer moored there. The boat had left Calcutta that morning on her way to Bombay, calling at Madras, Pondicherry, Galle, and Goa. Lamond knew her captain, who was aroused from his slumbers by the anchor-watch, and drove a shrewd bargain between yawns.

A cabin was at Maria's disposal, with berths for the baby and the ayah. Lamond saw that all was arranged for his daughter's comfort.

'And what will you do?' she asked.

They were standing on deck by the rail where the rope-ladder hung over the side to Lamond's boat.

He turned and looked at the riding-lights in the harbour.

'Oh, I will find a coaster to take me to the Dutch settlements or to Pondicherry, and after that I shall get away somehow.'

The flickering lamp of the anchor-watch showed whitely on his snow-like hair and moustache, as he clambered over the rail after kissing Maria, who said no word.

'Don't be too hard on me, Maria,' he said, with his feet on the ladder. 'Whatever I did, I did for you.'

And his face disappeared below the bulwarks.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NOT PROVEN.

HARRY was fortunate enough to obtain an early trial, which benefit he owed as much to the influence of friends as to the promptitude of the martial court. Of native evidence there was in this case fortunately none, and the proceedings of the court-martial were considerably curtailed by this omission. The follower of Mohammed in the witness-box is himself a difficult man to follow.

The trial was a short one, and Harry bore it with a manly straightforwardness of demeanour, which went far to win for him the sympathy of his judges. He pleaded guilty, and spoke the honest truth. The court, however, seemed to be under the influence of evidence which did not transpire at the trial, and must therefore have come to their ears before that event. The evidence of Frederic Marqueray was carefully taken. All the other witnesses had perished. Harry refused to plead the extenuating circumstance, but the court insisted, and Phillip Lamond's share in the night's work before Delhi was dragged out into the cold contemplation of Harry's brother officers.

During a long deliberation the prisoner was confined in an adjoining room, and when the court was at length agreed he came back to find his sword lying on the table with the hilt turned towards him. It was the sword that Miriam Gresham had drawn with a little shudder from its sheath, for the first time after it came into his possession in the drawing-room in St. Helen's Place.

The sword was his again, but the reprimand was so severe that all who heard it knew that Harry could never bare the blade in the service of his Queen again.

'I'm only fit for a soldier,' he said to his friends who crowded round him and shook him by the hand, 'and they won't have me.'

He went down to Garden Reach, where he expected to find Maria, to whom he had written many times without reply. But instead of his wife he found the cook's mother in the drawing-room, which ancient Hindu lady was looking over a photograph album in company with a select circle of her friends. It is to be feared that Harry kicked the cook. At all events he attempted to do so, and caused that functionary's mother to display an agility beyond her years.

The servants told him that Maria had left ten days earlier.

'The night of my arrest,' reflected Harry.

'Did the memsahib go away alone?' he asked with a sudden fierceness about his lips and eyes. 'No, she went with her father.' And Harry gave a sharp sigh of relief. There is no more suspicious man on earth than the naturally trusting man who has been deceived.

'Where had the memsahib gone?'

The servants looked at each other with raised shoulders and outspread hands, and the butler was understood to murmur that the wages were overdue.

'Go to the devil!' said Harry, and turning on his heel he faced

Marqueray, who was coming into the room.

'Where are the child and Maria?' he cried, as soon as he recognised the newcomer. 'This house is deserted. Half the ornaments are gone. The child has disappeared, and Maria. For God's sake tell me where they are, Marks.'

And he strode across the room towards his friend. The long confinement within doors had blanched his usually ruddy face. He was thin and haggard, with dull eyes looking from a countenance that bore the mark of disease and weakness.

'I don't know,' answered Marqueray gently; 'but I have a

clue. Sit down, and don't agitate yourself.'

The quiet man pushed the servants from the room, and closed the doors. He forced Harry into a chair.

'You've not been drinking?' he inquired in a hard voice.

'No,' answered Harry, without resentment. 'God! what a hard man you are!' he added with a short laugh. And he threw himself back in the chair, letting his hands fall on the basket-work arms with a gesture of despair.

Marqueray looked at him, and there was something in his grave eyes that made the impetuous Harry leap to his feet, and

seize the steady brown hand in both of his.

'No, by God!' he cried. 'You're the best friend I've got. I believe you're the best friend a man ever had.'

He returned to his seat half ashamed of his sudden outburst of feeling, which in truth Marqueray had received but awkwardly.

'I wonder why you do it,' he went on; and the new suspicion leapt suddenly into his eyes. 'It is not because you have fallen in love with Maria, like the rest of them?'

'No, I hate her,' replied Marqueray.

Harry drew in his feet and leant forward with his elbows on his knees, his eyes fixed on the matting under his feet.

'So do I,' he said, slowly and deliberately; 'but not the child. Funny, isn't it? I can't understand it. Maria can go to the devil, but I want the child.'

He looked up with shining eyes, and was not ashamed now.

'I think,' said Marqueray, 'that you will be able to get the child. I have had but little time this last week to make inquiries'—he did not think it worth mentioning that he had devoted every moment to his hearer's interests—'but it seems certain that they took passage to Ceylon, where you will probably find them.'

Harry's face brightened, and clouded over again almost at once. 'But how am I going to get the child away from her?' he asked hopelessly.

'Money,' returned the cynic, 'money will do it.'

Harry shook his head with a characteristic, reckless laugh.

'I have none,' he said.

'Not in hand,' replied his friend; 'but it is probable that if you went to law you could recover the whole amount of which you were defrauded. I do not say it is certain, but it is probable; and Lamond is not here—cannot come back—to fight it. You have, on the other hand, no right to the child. You cannot take it from its mother's custody.'

'It's a she,' broke in Harry, with that irresponsible sense of the humorous which never left him. 'Bless her heart! I don't think Wylam men are much good.'

'You cannot take her from her mother's custody without the mother's full consent,' went on Marqueray in his solemn way. Nothing roused him but the din of battle. 'But if you undertake to abandon all claim to the money you would probably secure that. You cannot have both.'

'Then I'll have the kid,' said Miss Wylam's father. And her price was forty thousand pounds.

Harry was all eagerness to start at once, and indeed would have departed then and there on his quest had not Marqueray restrained his impatience. There was much to be considered, and many precautions to be taken.

'A mother's love,' said Marqueray, 'is not a thing to be trifled with. We must have everything done decently and in order. Your lawyer must go with you.'

'Gad! what has a lawyer to do with a mother's love?' inquired Harry with a laugh, for his face never lost its power of lighting

up at a moment's notice. He was ever up or down, in the clouds or stumbling in the valley of despair.

'A great deal in this case,' answered Marqueray. 'You must

make quite sure of the child.'

'Then why not come with me yourself?' cried Harry excitedly. 'We could have a jolly time together.. And you're as good as any lawyer.'

He sat up in his chair, and clapped his two hands on his knees,

with the eagerness of a schoolboy planning an escapade.

'I cannot do that,' answered Marqueray with a queer hesitation. 'I am under orders to go to the North-West. They have given me a brigade.'

Harry sprang to his feet.

'A brigade? Begad!' he shouted. 'A brigade; and here am I chattering of my own affairs.'

He ran forward and clapped his friend on the back with vigorous enthusiasm.

'A brigade!' he said again. 'How old are you, Marks?'

'Forty-one.'

"Forty-one; only a few years older than me. Gad! I am glad, old man."

They were both in uniform, and the colonel's tunic worn by Marqueray was almost a new one. Harry's full-dress for the

court-martial was old and shabby.

He stood for a moment with his hands on his friend's shoulder, looking over his head out of the window across the silent river. Who shall say what thoughts were passing through his brain? He turned and looked at the two swords lying side by side on the table—the one never to be unsheathed again—and his breath was caught in a sharp sigh. The hand resting on Marqueray's shoulder was clenched.

To see them thus—Harry standing, broad-chested, upright, a dashing fearless figure; Marqueray spare and cold, with thoughtful eyes and a narrow face, sitting stiffly on a straight chair—to see them together, none would have hesitated in the choice of the likelier soldier. None would have scrupled to say which of the two was destined to carve with his sword the name he bore upon the hard tablets of history—to carry all before him in the world, and rise to honour and deathless distinction. The selection would have fallen upon Harry, who stood wondering vaguely who cut out the paths that men must tread.

It was Marqueray who spoke first, in a voice, perhaps intentionally, practical and indifferent. 'I wish I could go with you,' he said; 'but the lawyer will be the better man. You must see that you have entire and complete control of the child for the whole of her minority. It must be set down in black and white.'

Harry walked slowly to the window, where he stood with his back turned towards his companion. Perhaps he would not have been beloved as he was had he not had a heart for sudden remorse and self-abasement.

'And when I have got her,' he said, 'what am I to do with her? God knows I'm not fit to be a father. I'm not fit, Marks, to have the care of so much as a kitten.'

There was a long silence, broken at length by the elder man, who spoke slowly as if some thought or fear had touched the grave serenity with which he faced all that came in his path, whether difficulty, or danger, or responsibility.

'You will have to take her home to England,' he said.
'There is surely some one there who will take her in.'

Harry turned slowly, his face drawn with a sort of fear.

'Some one,' he echoed, in a dull voice. 'Some one—do you mean——?'

'I could only mean one person,' returned Marqueray simply. 'Miss Gresham.'

'But—no, by God, I couldn't do that. You don't understand, Marks. You don't know what a blackguard I've been.'

He sat heavily down with his head in his hands.

'I do not know much about women,' said the great soldier. 'Have not had much to do with them—only Lady Leaguer. But if I were in your place I think I should ask Miss Gresham. We do not always understand these things. She may want to do it.'

He sat staring at his own boots, with a puzzled expression as of one who had dealt in warfare and the ways of men all his life, but to whom the gentler side of creation was but a closed book.

There was much yet to be arranged, and Marqueray's time was limited. Many precautions were, he thought, necessary to a full and permanent victory over that mother's love, upon which he had set a price in hard rupees.

Harry, in his heedless impetuosity, would have journeyed to Ceylon that same night, taking ship hurriedly as Maria had done before him, in Diamond Harbour. But the cooler head of his friend prevailed, and Harry at last consented to secure the services of a trusty lawyer having knowledge of his affairs, which indeed were by now public property in Calcutta.

Then Marqueray looked at his watch, and said that it was time

for him to be going.

'When do you take command—when do you leave Calcutta?' asked Harry, with a twisted lip, as if endeavouring to smile indifferently.

'To-night,' answered his senior, rising.

'A brigade,' said Harry again, with a sharp sigh. 'And 'gad! they're right! There is no better man—Marks. And the men know it. They'll follow you to hell if need be, I know; for I followed you through the streets of Delhi.'

Marqueray went to the table where he had laid his sword when he unbuckled it. It was a plain regulation weapon—as bright as a mirror. Harry's was a finer sword, with an engraved

scabbard and silver at the hilt.

'Take mine,' said Harry suddenly. 'I shall not want it—again.'

Marqueray paused, with his hand on the table.

'I should like you to have it,' said Harry. 'It is a good sword—for I have tried it. I've nothing else to give you, and you have been the best friend I have had.'

Marqueray took up Harry's sword, and buckled it to his own side. His horse was pawing the gravel outside the window.

- 'And even you,' went on Harry, 'could not save me from my worst enemy.'
- 'Your worst enemy-?' inquired Marqueray, holding out his hand.
 - 'Myself,' answered Harry, with a laugh.

(To be concluded.)

Letters on Turkey.

IV.

HASAN AND HUSAIN.

THERE are certain things which seem even more incredible after one has seen them than before. That religious fanaticism may become a kind of raving madness, we know not only from mythology but from history also; and there are trustworthy accounts from eyewitnesses who describe the horrible tortures and mutilations which people will inflict on themselves, and the cruelties which they will perpetrate on others, while in a state of religious frenzy. accept these accounts without always fully realising them. make allowance for innate savagery, or, among more civilised races, for the influence of intoxicating liquor. But no one would call the present inhabitants of Constantinople savages, and the use of intoxicating liquor is less frequent there than among ourselves. And yet what we saw there on the feast of Hasan and Husain, and what may be seen there every year during the first ten days of the Moharran, seems so difficult to believe that one is almost afraid to describe it. The Turks themselves, it must be said to their honour, have little to do with these exhibitions. disapprove of them, but the Sultan, it is said, is unwilling to stop them for fear of being considered intolerant. The performance is chiefly Persian. The Persians resident in Constantinople form a kind of regnum in regno, and insist on their privilege of witnessing these religious atrocities every year. We were invited by the Persian Ambassador to witness this performance, and found our way towards the evening to a large square, a khân, surrounded by houses and shops, planted with trees, and crowded with people. When it grew dark the houses were illuminated, and large bonfires were lighted, mostly with petroleum. The mixture of smells, petroleum, escaped gas, sewers, and humanity, was terrible, even in the open air. After waiting for some time, music could be 240

heard, and the people made room for a large procession that marched in, consisting of more than a thousand men and boys, and preceded by children dressed in white, some riding on horseback with grown-up men at their sides, gesticulating, reciting, and crying. Then followed three companies, all in white shirts, some carrying swords, others heavy iron chains, and all shouting rhythmically, 'Vah Hasan! Vah Husain!' The first set struck their bare chests first with their right hand, then with the left. The next company passed by swinging their chains from side to side with a graceful dancing motion. The third and last lot passed along sideways in two long lines facing each other, each man holding his neighbour's girdle with the left hand, whilst they swung their swords in unison with the right. Between these rows marched men reciting the story of Hasan and Husain. The whole procession passed on thus slowly round the khan, and left by the gate at which they entered. We wondered why we had been told that only people of strong nerves should attend this celebration. Whilst the procession was visiting another khân we were refreshed with the most delicious tea. After a time we again heard the strains of music, this time louder and wilder, and the people all round us began to show signs of great and increasing excitement and agitation as the procession, lighted by the lurid glare of the petroleum bonfires, re-entered the khân. The children passed by as before, followed by a white horse, on which sat two white doves, emblematic of the souls of Hasan and Husain, cries of 'Vah! vah! Hasan! Husain!' grew louder and louder, many of the spectators joining in, whilst the first company passed beating their bare breasts with such violence and regularity that it sounded like sledge hammers coming down on blocks of granite. The second company passed swinging their chains over their heads, and bringing them down on their now bare backs till the flesh was lacerated and streaming with blood. Then, last and worst of all, came the men with the swords, cutting themselves, particularly their heads, in good earnest, so that one had to stand back to avoid the blood which spurted forth in all directions. Soon their white shirts were crimson with blood, their heads looked as if covered with a red fez, and the pavement was running with blood; and yet these people marched on as if on parade. Very few indeed fell out. One man fell down dead before our eyes; and at last a kind of police came forward, holding their sticks over the people so as to prevent their hacking themselves to death in their frenzy. There was little violence, and there was no trace of drunkenness. The people, though densely crowded, were perfectly orderly, and one saw old rough men crying and shedding bitter tears, and with many sobs uttering the names Hasan and Husain. They were all men of the lower and lowest classes as far as one could judge from their outward appearance, and if you had asked one of them why they cried so bitterly, they would probably have had nothing to answer but 'Oh, Hasan and Husain!' It is true there were some men who recited the history of Hasan and Husain, but no one seemed to listen to them; nay, their voices were completely drowned by the regular shouts of 'Hasan and Husain!'

We stayed as long as we could, till the heat and the various exhalations became intolerable. We were afraid it would be impossible to get through the compact surging mass of human beings, all gesticulating wildly and looking fierce and uncanny. The passages were narrow, and we had a number of ladies in our party. But as soon as the people saw the Imperial aide-de-camp who was with us, they made room for us. No number of policemen in London could have cleared a passage so quickly as our aide-de-camp and a few kavasses. When I expressed my admiration of this orderly crowd to a Turkish friend, he smiled and said, 'Ah, we have no women in our crowds.' The presence of women accounts evidently to an Eastern mind for most of our troubles in the West, and they express their conviction that we shall never get on unless we shut them up again.

Now if we ask why these hundreds and thousands of men were shedding tears and crying 'Hasan and Husain!' history tells us little more than that Hasan, the fifth Khalif, the son of Fâtimah and of Ali, the fourth Khalif, reigned only half a year and was probably poisoned by his wife, while Husain was slain in the battle of Kerbelah, 680 A.D., fighting against the Syrian army of Obaidallah. Many princes have fallen under similar circumstances, but their very names are now forgotten, and no one sheds a tear about them. The real reason of these tears for Hasan and Husain lies much deeper. It is first of all religious. Mohammed, in spite of all his remonstrances and his protestations that he was a man, and a man only, was soon represented as having been created by Allah in the beginning of all things, and before there was as yet either heaven or earth, darkness, light, sun, moon, paradise, or hell. The only surviving child of Mohammed was Fâtimah, the wife of Ali, and the mother of Hasan and Husain. These four were soon made to share in the same miraculous birth242

right as the Prophet, and opposition to them or the killing of any of them was therefore looked upon as a kind of sacrilege. were of the blood of Mohammed, and the shedding of that sacred blood was the highest crime that could be committed. the religious feeling for Hasan and Husain, both murdered, though they were in a very special sense of the blood of Mohammed, if not the direct descendants of Allah. There is besides a purely sentimental feeling for Hasan and Husain, because they were murdered young, and because national poetry has endowed them with many virtues. In Persia there are real miracle-plays (some of them translated by the late Sir Lewis Pelly), very different from the wild shoutings of the crowds at Constantinople, and in them Hasan, and particularly Husain, are represented as heroes and martyrs, and endowed with every virtue under the sun. The very day before the final battle in which he fell Husain was asked to surrender, but he declined. His sister came to him in the night, crying, 'Alas for the desolation of my family! My mother Fâtimah is dead, and my father Ali and my brother Hasan. Alas for the destruction that is past! and alas for the destruction that is to come!' Then Husain replied, 'Sister, put your trust in God, and know that man is born to die and that the heavens shall not remain; everything shall pass away but the presence of God, who created all things by His power, and shall make them by His power to pass away, and they shall return to Him alone. My father was better than I, my mother was better than I, and my brother was better than I, and they and we and all Muslims have an example in the Apostle of God.' Then he told his soldiers to march away and leave him alone because he alone was wanted; but they all refused, and determined to fight. Then Husain mounted his horse and set the Korán before him, crying, 'O God, Thou art my confidence in any trouble and my hope in every calamity.' His sister and daughter began to weep, but Husain remained firm. At that very moment some of the enemy's cavalry went over to him. But the enemy was too strong for Husain's army. Husain himself was struck on the head, and had to retire to his tent, streaming with blood. He sat down and took his little son on his lap, who was immediately killed by an arrow. The father placed the little corpse on the ground and cried, 'We come from God and we return to Him. O God, give me strength to bear these misfortunes.' He then ran toward the Euphrates to get some water to drink, and there was struck by an arrow in his mouth. While he stood and prayed, his little nephew ran up to kiss him, and had his hand cut off with a sword. Husain wept, and said, 'Thy reward, dear child, is with thy forefathers in the realms of bliss.' Though wounded and faint, Husain charged the enemy bravely and was soon killed, his corpse being trampled into the ground by the enemy's horsemen.

Whether all this be historically true or not, when presented on a stage we can quite imagine that it might draw tears from the spectators' eyes. But that, without any appeal to the eyes, hundreds of rough, nay ruffianly-looking men, should gash and lacerate themselves almost unto death, while others stand about shedding bitter tears, is more difficult to explain. Still so it was, and there were the members of most of the foreign Embassies and Legations present to witness it, few going home without having their dresses spattered with blood.

There is, however, besides the religious and sentimental, another source, if not of the tears, at least of the excitement, and that source is political, if not ethnological. It is political in so far that of the two great divisions of the Mohammedans, the Shiītes and Sunnites, the former never recognised any true Khalifs except the direct descendants of Mohammed, namely, Ali, the husband of Fâtimah, and their sons, Hasan and Husain. Abubekr, Omar, and Osman were in their eyes usurpers. Still more so were the Omayades, the successors of Mu'awiyah, who in 661 A.D. took the Khalifate from Hasan. This feeling of hostility between the Shiītes and Sunnites continues to the present day, and may still become not only the excuse for street rows, but the cause of serious political troubles.

There may even be an ethnological element at the bottom of this political division, for the Shiites are mostly Persian, that is, Aryan; the Sunnites are Arab, that is, Semitic. The Arab character is stiff, formal, and legal; the Persian character is free, poetical, and philosophical. The Persians, though conquered by the Arabs, were for a long time intellectually the masters and teachers of their conquerors. At Constantinople they live side by side, apparently in peace, but the Persians must not be offended, and to deprive them of their national festival would be an offence in their eyes, though in the eyes of the world it would be a wholesome removal of an offensive anachronism. When one sees the state of frenzy into which thousands of people can work themselves up by merely shouting for hours 'Hasan and Husain!' one understands the danger that might arise if ever more articulate utterance should be given to their shouts. One clever leader might

carry away these people to a general massacre, and they would probably be as ready to die as they are to lie bleeding in the street, shouting 'Hasan and Husain!' to the very end, and looking forward with delight to the black-eyed girls, and to Hasan and Husain, waiting for them in Paradise.

V.

TURKISH LADIES.

No one who visits Turkey can know anything of the real life of the people unless he has seen some of the harems, for it is a mistake to imagine that because they are invisible to the outer world the Turkish women have no influence. On the contrary, unable to spend their time in going about and in visiting or receiving general visitors, they have all the more leisure for intrigue and scheming, and it must be remembered that all marriages are arranged exclusively by the female relations on both sides.

Though the present sultan's own wives and slaves are said to be mere frivolous dolls, spending their energies on dress and eating sweetmeats, many of the pashas' wives are women of keen intelligence, able to manage their husbands' properties, and it is well known that the valideh sultans, or mothers of the sultans, have often exercised immense influence in State affairs. The young girls now in Turkey are all being educated, the sultan having established excellent schools, where the girls go till the age of twelve or so, when they 'put on the yashmak' and disappear. Up to that age they may be seen sitting with their fathers in the public gardens of an afternoon, and going to and from school of a morning, attended, if of the higher classes, by the usual hideous black attendant. I was not invited to the royal harem, but I had the opportunity of seeing several Turkish homes during our stay at Constantinople. My first visit was to the wife of one of the great ministers. wife of one of the foreign pashas in the Turkish service arranged the visit, and kindly accompanied me. We drove to a part of Pera beyond the Grande Rue, and almost opposite the palace of Yildiz, though separated from it by a deep valley. I had often observed when driving the high white walls in this locality, but had never realised that they concealed the harems of many of the ministers and highest nobility. We passed the minister's own house, his selamlik, and across the road stopped at a high gate in the high wall, where we prepared to leave the carriage; but the gates were opened for us, and we were desired to drive in, as the gardeners were still at work, so that the ladies could not be in the garden. We drew up at the door of a large square white house, the entrance up high steps. All round us rose the harem walls, not covered with creepers as at Yildiz, but bare and white, and so high that even from the top windows of the house nothing could be seen. In spite of the beautiful turf and brilliant flower-beds and shrubs, it looked and felt like a prison. The door was opened by a slave, and we found ourselves in a long and very narrow passage, which led into a large and lofty central hall full of palms, with a fountain playing in the middle, and all round stood the slaves—the women, black and white, in bright-coloured cotton dresses and white turbans, the black eunuchs in frock coat and fez.

We were shown into a large handsomely furnished room, with a splendid yellow carpet, but without a book, or work, or any sign of life and occupation. The little wife soon appeared, dressed in European dress; in fact, it is only in the Royal Harem that the native costume is kept up. She was accompanied by her sisterin-law, the wife of the minister's brother. The latter spoke Turkish only, so my friend devoted herself to her, whilst I had a lively talk in French with the minister's wife. She was small and nice-looking, with brilliant eyes. She told me that she drove out once, at the utmost twice a year, in a shut carriage, the only time she passed outside those terrible walls. She was fond of her garden and her pets, cats and birds, but she had no children, and, I was told, lived in constant dread that her husband would, in consequence, divorce her, for very few Turks now have two wives. Her idea of European life was founded on French novels, which she read incessantly, and she said to me: 'Well, we are happier than you, for our husbands may fancy one of our slaves whom we know, but your husbands go about with French actresses whom you don't know!' Sweetmeats were brought in by slaves, and then cigarettes, but I had to confess my ignorance of smoking, and, lastly, the delicious Turkish coffee in golden cup stands. The minister's wife is a good musician, and her sisterin-law draws and paints, taught by the minister, who is quite a good artist; but in spite of music and painting, and French novels, and lovely garden, I had a sad feeling that she was like a bird beating her wings against her gilded cage. She had read too much to be content. All the time of our visit the doors stood open, and the slaves passed and repassed, as if keeping up a constant espionage. We were just going into the garden, a slave reporting the departure of the gardeners, when the minister and his brother came in, having hurried back from the Palace to see us. From the moment of their arrival the two little wives were absolutely silent, and though I tried to include his wife in my interesting talk with the minister, I failed utterly; but, as I reflected afterwards, we were talking of the mosques and buildings, of the sarcophagi in the Museum, and the treasures of the Seraglio, which she had never seen, and never could see, so our conversation must have been unintelligible to her. I came away with a feeling of the deepest pity for these two women, who seemed to me restless and unsatisfied, indulged as they evidently were by their husbands and surrounded by all

that wealth could give them.

During our stay at Therapia the Austrian ambassadress took me to call on the wife of Munir Pasha, Grand Master of Ceremonies. Their house at Yeni Keui is on the Bosphorus (the walls washed by the water), and I had already visited Munir Pasha in his selamlik, separated from the harem by a beautiful garden, full of hundreds of roses of different sorts. there was no harem wall, the windows were all carefully latticed, but the inmates can see out through the lattice, though no one can see them. We were in one of the Austrian caïques, and were received on landing by two or three blackies, one of whom, a singularly tall figure, I had noticed more than once on the steamer in attendance on the young daughter on her way to and from school. We found our hostess in a large room on the ground floor, and as she only spoke Turkish, her nephew, a palace aide-de-camp, was there to interpret. Munir Pasha's wife is a very capable, clever woman, probably not what we should call highly educated, but able to conduct all her husband's affairs and manage his estate, as nearly his whole time must be spent at Though everything had to be said through the nephew, we speaking French, the conversation never flagged for a moment. This was the only harem I visited where no refreshments were offered us. Our hostess, who was a woman of between forty and fifty, and, like most Turkish ladies, decidedly stout, was dressed in mauve-coloured muslin, with a chain of very large amethysts round her neck; her hair was dark and dressed in the French fashion of the day. The house was built like most of the houses I saw, the front door opening at once into a central hall with rooms on each side, the end opposite the door filled by a wide handsome staircase. Munir's wife gave me the idea of a happy busy woman. She told us she went out in her caïque constantly, of course veiled and in the ferejeh, the shapeless cloak worn by Turkish ladies, old and young, which entirely conceals the figure, and the ugliness of which is not even redeemed by the splendid materials and brilliant colours usually employed. Our hostess parted with us at the door of the room, for fear any man might be in sight through the open door of the hall.

Not long after this, my husband and I and our son, who is a Secretary of Embassy, were invited to luncheon by Hamdy Bey, the head of the Museum of Antiquities and discoverer of the Sidon Sarcophagi, which are the glory of the museum. His house is on the Bosphorus, but a public road runs between it and the water. We were shown upstairs, where, in a room full of art treasures, wonderful specimens of faïence tiles and Oriental hangings, we found our host and his wife. She is of French origin, though brought up as a Turkish lady, but she sees her husband's friends and presides at his table. The whole house is furnished in European style, and, but for the view over the Bosphorus and the caïques and, strange boats passing every minute, one might fancy oneself in any country but Turkey. After luncheon, during which his wife bore her part in the animated French conversation, she took me back to her drawing-room, whilst the gentlemen went to the men's side of the house to smoke. My hostess said what a delight it must be to me to travel, on which I asked whether she never accompanied her husband. She was genuinely shocked, and tolo me that was an impossibility, adding: 'I never cross the road behind the house to my hill garden except in yashmak.'

We had seen so much of Sadik Bey, the delightful Palace Aide-de-camp who attended us everywhere at the Sultan's desire, that I felt a great wish to see his home, though he had, of course, never talked of it to us and I did not know how many children he had. He is an Arab, and had once incidentally mentioned that his wife was Arab too. He seemed very much pleased at my wish, and it was settled that I should go down from Therapia to Pera to call on 'Mrs. Sadik.' His house was small, but loftier than most Turkish houses, and built on the very edge of the steep hill opposite Yildiz Palace. Here, again, a narrow passage shut off all view of the entrance door from the interior of the house. I was shown into what was evidently his sitting-room on the ground floor, for there was no lattice. The room was plainly furnished, but there was a bookcase full of French

248

and German books, for Sadik Bey had been some time in Berlin, and French he had learnt in Pera; he did not understand English. He soon appeared and took me upstairs. At the top of the staircase stood his very pretty wife, small, with fine eyes, and masses of dark hair, in which she wore a natural rose. She was dressed in white muslin, with white satin shoes, the dress trimmed with pink ribbons and a scarlet sash, whilst the rose was deep crimson. She wore very fine diamonds, and was evidently got up in her very best, and in her eyes my black brocade must have seemed very dingy. The room into which we went was small and tightly latticed. She seemed bright and happy, and cast looks of adoring affection on her lord and master, who sat opposite her, and opened the conversation by asking: 'What do you think of her?' I could truly say she was the prettiest woman I had seen in Pera. It was a very hot day, and Sadik Bey took down the lattice, and the whole beautiful view burst on me of the green hill opposite, crowned by the white kiosks of Yildiz Palace, and the Mosque where the Sultan goes for Selamlik, and to the right the waters of the Bosphorus, sparkling over the brown roofs of the houses in the Beshiktash quarter. From this moment his wife moved back, and sat where she could not see anything out of window but the sky. The children were then brought in-a little girl of about eight, the most fantastic figure, whose dress and hat would have suited Madge Wildfire. She went to school every morning, and of an afternoon learned music and needlework from her mother, who is particularly skilful with her needle. Like her mother, the child only speaks Turkish and Arabic, and her father told me was never to learn any European language. 'What is the good? It only makes them unhappy;' and I felt he was right. The baby boy of eighteen months, a very fine child, was carried in by his mother; and lastly her mother, a dear old lady, with a white linen covering over her head and a shapeless gown of some soft dark material, came in, bringing me the most delicious iced-almond drink, rather like the almond sherbet one gets in Sweden. I should like to have seen more of the little house, but felt shy about asking to go into other rooms, as I did not know how far it might be liked; but I left them feeling that they were a really happy family, and there could be no doubt of the affection between husband and wife, and the perfect content of the wife in her round of home duties. And yet I heard Sadik Bey say later on, when he had taken his family into the country not far

from Therapia, that there was nothing to do, for 'one can't sit with the women'—as if they were far his inferiors.

My last experience was in the house of a very liberal-minded Turkish lady, a distant connection of the Sultan, who had allowed her lovely daughters to visit freely at the various embassies till they were above fifteen, when the Sultan interfered and ordered them to assume the yashmak. They are said when in Egypt or on the Princes' Islands in the Marmora to be very emancipated. They had a fine house on the Bosphorus, with a large balcony, almost covered by Virginian creeper, and here, going by in the steamer, I had often caught a glimpse of their heads as they sat on the balcony at work or afternoon tea. The mother was out the day I called. I found the daughters most attractive and strikingly handsome. They spoke English well, and had read a good deal. One was a fine musician, the other a clever artist, and many of her studies and sketches in oils hung about the rooms. They showed me their own boudoir, which was like any girl's sittingroom in England, only larger and more handsomely furnished. The panels of the doors were fitted with their own sketches from Cairo, and the tables were covered with photographs. It was evident that they tried to make the best of their circumscribed lives, but they were not happy. The youngest was engaged to a man of very bad character, whom she has since divorced, and it was evident from things she said that she hated the idea of her marriage and was postponing it as long as possible. We had five o'clock tea on the balcony, where they could see and not be distinctly seen. They went out every evening in their caïque, and not so thickly veiled but that I often recognised them afterwards. They filled me with the deepest pity, as I thought of the unsatisfied lives that stretched before them.

We can hardly realise the full monotony of a Turkish lady's life. Every woman, rich or poor, with the least regard to her character must be in her house by sundown. Only think of the long, dull winter afternoons and evenings when no friend can come near them, as all their female friends must be in their own houses, and male friends they cannot have. Even the men of their own family associate but little with them. Let us hope that with the increase of intercourse between Europeans and Turks the life of the women must change, and that as the men have dropped their oriental garb the women will in time part with the yashmak and ferejeh, and that with them their isolated lives will cease. Young Turks who have been educated in Berlin, Paris, and

Vienna before they marry have been heard to declare that their wives shall be free, and yet when it comes to the point they have all yielded to the tyranny of custom. Nor is there any chance of change during the reign of Abdul Hamid, whose views on the seclusion of women are very strict, scarcely a year passing without fresh laws on thicker yashmaks and more shapeless fereiehs. On the Bosphorus their caïques are a great resource to the Turkish ladies, but in Pera those of the upper classes can only go out, in closed carriages, to the Sweet Waters, occasionally accompanied by their husbands on horseback. But they may speak to no one whilst driving; their own husbands and sons cannot even bow to them as they pass, and no one would venture to say a word to his own wife or mother when the carriage pulls up—the police would at once interfere. The highest mark of respect is to turn your back on a lady, and this is de riqueur when any member of the Imperial harem passes. We were drinking coffee one day at the Sweet Waters, at the part which flows by the gardens of a country palace of the sultan. All at once Sadik Bey jumped up and ran behind a tree, with his back to the Sweet Waters. Two or three closed carriages of the Imperial harem were passing along the road in the gardens on the other side of the river, the blinds so far drawn down that it was impossible to see if anyone was inside, and yet all along our side we saw the Turks, whether officers or civilians, going through the same absurd ceremony, and only when the carriages were out of sight did they return to their coffee. Formerly a man never saw the face of his intended till after the marriage ceremony, when they withdrew into a room and the veil was lifted for the first time. Now it is generally contrived that the bridegroom elect shall see his future wife for a moment unveiled. This seclusion of the wives prevents hospitality in our sense of the word. The pashas entertain each other, and a few of them invite European gentlemen to their houses; but no ladies, of course, can ever be received where there is no hostess to entertain them. Hamdy Bey is the one exception I know of, but his wife is French by birth. Till the happier days dawn when Turkish women can share the lives of their fathers and husbands, it seems to me that their better education only makes them restless and unhappy, and that those women are the best off who, like the women of the sultan's harem, have little interest beyond dress and sweetmeats, and remain children-and spoilt children-all their lives.

André's Ride.

WHEN André rode to Pont-du-lac,
With all his raiders at his back,
Mon Dieu! the tumult in the town!
Scarce clanged the great portcullis down
Ere in the sunshine gleamed his spears
And up marched all his musketeers,
And far and fast in haste's array
Sped men to fight and priests to pray;
In every street a barricade
Of aught that lay to hand was made,
From every house a man was told
Nor quittance given to young or old;
Should youth be spared or age be slack
When André rode to Pont-du-lac?

When André rode to Pont-du-lac
With all his ravening reiver-pack,
The mid lake was a frozen road
Unbending to the cannon's load,
No warmth the sun had as it shone,
The kine were stalled, the birds were gone;
Like wild things seemed the shapes of fur
With which was every street astir,
And over all the huddling crowd
The thick breath hung—a solid cloud—
Roof, road, and river, all were white,
Men moved benumbed by day—by night
The boldest durst not bivouac,
When André rode to Pont-du-lac.

When André rode to Pont-du-lac We scarce could stem his swift attack, A halt, a cheer, a bugle-call,
Like wild cats they were up the wall,
But still as each man won the town
We tossed him from the ramparts down;
And when at last the stormers quailed
And back the assailants shrank assailed,
Like wounded wasps that still could sting,
Or tigers that had missed their spring,
They would not fly, but turned at bay
And fought out all the dying day;
Sweet saints! it was a crimson track
That André left by Pont-du-lac.

When André rode to Pont-du-lac
Said he: 'A troop of girls could sack
This huckster town that hugs its hoard
But wists not how to wield a sword.'
It makes my blood warm now to know
How soon Sir Cockerel ceased to crow,
And how 'twas my sure dagger-point
In André's harness found a joint,
For I, who now am old, was young,
And strong the thews were, now unstrung,
And deadly though our danger then,
I would that day were back again;
Ay, would to God the day were back
When André rode to Pont-du-lac.

A. H. BEESLY.

The Wooing of William.

EVENING was closing in, and the inhabitants of Thornleigh were gathering round their firesides, after their evening meal, when the Canon, who had for a long time ruled with beneficent sway the inhabitants of that old-world hamlet, came striding at a prodigious rate over the cobble-stones of its one rambling street, looking neither to right nor to left, as though bent on an errand which would not brook delay. When he came to the long, low thatched cottage inhabited by William Lupton, the wheelwright's assistant, he paused a moment, frowning, and then, passing through the wicket-gate and up the flagged path, walked straight into the kitchen, and roused with a vigorous shake the owner thereof, who was dozing in the wooden armchair by the fire.

'I want to talk to you,' said the Canon.

William sat upright, blinking at him with a puzzled and rather anxious expression of countenance.

The Canon gazed at him severely, and slowly shook his head.

The fact was that since the death of his old mother William Lupton had been steadily 'going to the bad.' But a few hours previously his pastor had descried him making for the Thornleigh Arms in the company of two or three boon companions, one of whom had since been discovered in a ditch, while another was at that very moment receiving sundry wifely admonitions conveyed by means of a slipper. William himself, though not precisely in that condition recognised as 'market-fuddled,' was far from sober. This state of things could not continue; he was demoralising the entire village as well as ruining himself. The Canon had a remedy of his own for such cases which he meant to apply without loss of time. William Lupton must be made to marry. The Canon considered the imposition of matrimony when circumstances appeared to demand it as much a part of his

sacerdotal duties as the baptizing of the newly-born or the burial of the dead. And now, as he looked round the untidy room and at the unkempt figure before him, he felt that matrimony would in this instance prove not merely just retribution for William's transgressions, but really a blessing which he would soon appreciate.

'Are you not ashamed of yourself?' he began sternly. 'I wonder what your poor mother would say if she could see this place, she who always worked so hard to keep it tidy! And look at your shirt! Tut! tut! I only wonder what the house is like upstairs.'

William turned a meditative eye towards the ceiling, but did

not commit himself.

'Poor old Margery!' continued the Canon. 'She would not rest in her grave if she knew! What a thrifty soul she was!'

'Ah!' commented William. 'Hoo was very house-proud,

was mother, hoo was thot.'

'Certainly her son is not,' was the severe rejoinder. 'What becomes of all your good wages, William? Where do they go to?

You are ruining yourself, and many another too.'

Being now fairly started, the Canon dilated for some time on William's enormities, and William listened in silence, occasionally rubbing his hands against the knees of his trousers and shaking his head in what his pastor took to be a penitent manner. At last, just as the latter, having drawn a highly coloured picture of the woe and desolation which through William's evil example would soon overspread the once peaceful village of Thornleigh, the wheelwright rose and pointed to the clock.

'Canon,' he said, 'yo'n bin agate o' bargin' for nigh a quarter of an hour. Dunnot you think it's about time to give ower?'

The Canon, too much accustomed to the plain speaking of his parishioners to be disconcerted or offended, conquered a momentary inclination to laugh, and said solemnly—

'I'll come to the point, then. You must marry, William.'

'Mun I?' cried Lupton. 'Who says that?'

'I say it, and if you had any sense'—looking sharply at William, whose countenance was not at that moment remarkable for the sagacity of its expression—'you would say so yourself. Think how comfortable it would be, man,' dropping his stern tone and speaking confidentially, 'when you came home from work of an evening to find a clean cosy room——'

William glanced round the room.

'A well-swept hearth, with the kettle singing cheerily on the hob.'

William gazed at the hearth, and then, with half-tipsy gravity, looked about for the kettle, which happened to be upside-down in a remote corner where he had kicked it out of his way a little time before. His eye rested on it for a moment with an expression of some surprise, and then reverted to the Canon.

'The table spread for a substantial meal, and a nice'—speaking with great emphasis—'tidy, thrifty wife waiting to welcome you. You would not want to go to the Thornleigh Arms then, I fancy.'

William appeared unconvinced. He turned his head reflectively on one side, and scratched his long sallow jaw.

'I never did howd wi' havin' strange women about,' he observed presently.

The Canon laughed. 'You would soon cease to look upon your wife as a strange woman,' he said. 'Come, William, don't be foolish. You are forty-three, you have got a nice house and are receiving high wages; it's a positive shame for you to remain a bachelor when there are so many good women who can't get husbands.'

'Theer's a mony,' remarked William, 'as 'ud be ready and willin' to wed wi' me if I'd have 'em. Jump at me, they would.'

'It is well to know your own value,' assented the Canon, much tickled, for he had never hitherto regarded William Lupton in the light of a lady-killer; but presumably he himself knew best. 'A hard-working little wife would make all the difference to your home. You would soon get used to her. And there'd be children by-and-by—you know you are fond of children!'

'Ah!' assented William, evidently gazing into futurity, 'I would do wi' a two-three childer. It's nobbut the wife I connot bring my mind to. But theer's a mony here in Thornleigh Village as 'ud be willin' enough to tak' me,' jerking his head sideways with a knowing air. 'Aye, an' fain too if I'd gi' 'em the chonce.'

'I don't doubt it,' said the Canon. 'You needn't go far to look for one, I know. What do you say to little Mrs. Cowell next door? She's a nice little body, and would make you very happy, William.' A certain persuasiveness in the Canon's tone was now perceptible. 'It would be so convenient, too, to throw these two houses into one again. You know they originally made one house—the partition was only put up in your father's time; you would have a really good house then.'

Lupton appeared to consider that there was something in this argument, but remarked presently, without any appearance of

enthusiasm, 'Hoo's a widow.'

'She is certainly, but she's a young woman still, and poor Ned and she did not see much of each other of late years. You know he went mad shortly after the marriage, and was shut up in the county asylum until he died two years ago. Poor Barbara Cowell! She has had a hard life of it, but she's a plucky little creature, and has kept herself and her child without being beholden to anybody. I have a great respect for Barbara. I don't think the fact of her being a widow is against her-of course there's the child.'

'Theer's the child,' echoed William, looking at the Canon pensively, and cracking his finger-joints the while. 'I haven't got no objections to th' child. If a mon was to wed th' mother th' child 'ud coom in 'andy enough-seems as if 't 'ud tak' th' newness off t' 'ave th' little lad theer. A body wouldn't feel so strange like.'

'Very well, very well; all the better if you can look on the matter in that light—and Barbara herself is a nice little woman. Come, William, you have been her neighbour for four years now;

you must own she's a nice little woman.'

William pushed back his chair, grunted, rolled his eyes distractedly round the room, and finally observed with unwonted gallantry that the little widow was none so ill.

'Don't you think, then, that it would be a good thing if you

married her?'

Lupton, after a pause of deliberation, gruffly admitted that he 'met do war.'

'Well, then, ask her,' proposed his pastor, rubbing his hands with glee, so charmed was he at the unexpected ease of his victory. But William turned on him with sudden fierceness.

'Coom,' he said, 'this is rayther strong! Yo're a cool 'and, Canon, I will say. "Ax her," says yo'. I'm noan bahn to have words put into my mouth that gate. Ax her, indeed!'

'But, my dear man, if you don't how's the job to be done?'

'I care nowt if the job is never done!' retorted William, still majestically irate. 'A mon mun stop soomwheer! "Ax her," says vo', as cool as if yo' were sayin' "Good-day."'

After a little more argument the Canon, finding that the man's tone grew more and more quarrelsome, and that his mind was, if anything, a little less clear than at the beginning of the discussion, deemed it more prudent to retire. Once outside, having paused for a moment to chuckle to himself, he tapped at the adjoining door. A child's voice prattling merrily within at first prevented his summons being heard, but, on the knock being repeated, steps came hurriedly across the tiled floor, and the door opened. A woman's figure, small and rounded in outline, appeared against a ruddy background of firelight.

'Oh! it's yo', Canon, is it? Yo'n been a stranger lately. I

haven't set e'en on yo' sin' Sunday.'

'I've been busy, Barbara,' said he, stepping across the threshold. 'Well, and how's our Tommy, and how much has he learnt at school to-day?'

Tommy approached, holding a dimpled arm before his face, but presently dropping it a little, just enough to allow his bright eyes to peer through the overhanging thatch of curls, he announced that he had been a very good boy, and intimated that he could do

with a bit of toffy.

But the Canon tapped him absently on the cheek, and took possession of the elbow-chair before the fire, which, according to the rites of cottage hospitality, Mrs. Cowell had previously dusted with her apron. This, indeed, was a wholly unnecessary proceeding, for the little room, though hare enough, was spick and span in every point. Barbara, as became a hostess, sat down herself, and, drawing Tommy to her side, desired him in undertones to 'give ower moiderin' Canon and keep still.'

She was a fair little woman, with a chubby, rosy, innocent face, and a pair of blue eyes as round and babyish as Tommy's own. She pleated her apron nervously as the Canon kept silence. Something in his manner alarmed her, and she knew not what this visit might portend. But, when he at length spoke, his gentle

tone reassured her.

'You must be very lonely here, Barbara.'

Mrs. Cowell stopped pleating her apron, and raised one corner to her eyes. She was a 'feelin' woman, and her tears lay very near the surface.

'Eh, Canon,' she said, and shook her head. 'Eh, dear o' me! Yes, I am that! Eh, soomtimes when our Tommy's abed o' neets, an' I'm sat here sewin', eh, I do feel 'onely! An' when I begin o' thinkin' o' poor Ned, I fair get broken-hearted!'

'Poor Ned!' echoed the Canon, looking at her oddly, and rubbing his nose after a fashion that he had when a little bit irritated—before poor Ned had been shut up it had been his habit

to bite Barbara when in a playful humour, and occasionally to pull the hair out of her head—the Canon could not quite manage to

assume a sympathetic tone in alluding to him.

'I were thinkin',' resumed Mrs. Cowell, now applying her apron to the other eye, 'only this very evenin', of this day three year ago. Poor Ned! I'd got him his tea ready, and made him a nice bit o' toast, and warmed up bacon and all, and he wouldn't coom in. No, he wouldn't. He were sat on the wall of pigsty yonder, singin' to hissel' as merry as a cricket, and I geet vexed at th' end—eh, how could I ever ha' had th' 'eart! but theer, I'm of that nervous disposition! I went and picked up a little stone and threw it at him, I did'—here Mrs. Cowell became almost inarticulate—'and 'twere nobbut three month' arter they took him off to th' 'sylum!'

'Well, well,' said the Canon, 'it wasn't always easy to manage

him, I dare say.'

'It was not,' assented the disconsolate widow. 'That very neet arter he coom in he sat him down on the table and began o' throwin' every single thing upon it into fire. All my chany was broke, and the tea-pot, it lit here, see'—pointing to a brownish stain on the wall—'just above th' child's cradle; it might ha' been the death on it. Poor Ned, I didn't ought to ha' angered him.'

'He must have been a lively companion,' remarked the Canon dryly. 'However, he's dead and gone now, poor fellow! and you're alone in the world.'

Barbara groaned into her apron by way of emphatically endorsing the remark.

The Canon cleared his throat, and looked at her with his head

a little on one side.

'William Lupton next door is a lonely man too,' he observed.

Mrs. Cowell drew down her apron, and smoothed its folds demurely; she began to guess at the visitor's drift.

'Funny, isn't it?' he went on, looking at the thin partition which divided the two houses. 'He sits by himself on that side of the partition, and you sit by yourself on this. He is a good fellow, though he has his faults.'

Mrs. Cowell remarked, with a certain primness of manner, that she had always heard he was a very good son.

'And good sons make good husbands, they say, don't they?' insinuated the Canon.

Barbara, with a little simper, replied that so folks said indeed.

'He agreed with me, just now, that you would make a very good wife, Barbara.'

Mrs. Cowell laid one chubby little hand on each of her knees, and looked at the Canon with her big round earnest eyes: the situation was growing interesting.

'He said Tommy was a fine lad,' added the matchmaker casually. 'He seemed to think it would be very pleasant to have a little fellow like that running about the house.'

'Eh, did he?' cried Barbara, much gratified.

'Suppose,' resumed the Canon persuasively, 'you two made up your minds to take each other "for better, for worse," and that partition were pulled down, and we had one comfortable family party instead of two lonely people pining in their respective corners, what a good thing that would be!

His conscience smote him somewhat as he made this speech. William Lupton's condition could not be accurately described as 'pining,' and he was far more frequently to be found in the chimney-corner of the Thornleigh Arms than in the ingle-nook which was legitimately his own. But it is surely permissible to be a little picturesque in a good cause.

Mrs. Cowell, looking straight at the Canon, drew in her breath with a sucking sound, and remarked, 'I'm agree'ble.'

The Canon could not help smiling. William had not been wrong, then, in his estimation of his own value. Here was this nice little woman ready indeed to 'jump at him.'

'He's addlin' good wage,' observed the romantic matron presently, 'and his side o' th' house is better nor this, and th' garden 'ud be nice all thrown into one. And his takkin' to Tommy mak's it coom easier like. I reckon we's do very well. Will yo' be shoutin' us soon, think yo'?'

The Canon's face lengthened. Barbara must not be too impetuous or she would spoil everything.

'We mustn't go too fast,' he said in some alarm. 'William has peculiar notions, you know. He is a shy man—indeed, I may say a coy man.' Here the Canon threw back his head and laughed: the expression tickled him when he recalled William's long lean figure and serious swarthy face. 'You must give him time. I don't suppose the idea ever crossed his mind until this evening, so you must let him get used to it. Be very friendly when you meet, and encourage him, and so forth.'

'I've never,' said Mrs. Cowell reflectively, 'spoke a word to William Lupton that I can call to mind. He's a very silent man. He never so mich as passed the time of day to me.'

'All the more reason to be cautious,' said her friend, rising. 'Well, good-bye, Barbara. I hope the affair will come off. But don't frighten William, you know.'

He went away laughing to himself, but nevertheless well

pleased with the plan he had inaugurated.

Next morning William paused on his way to work, and, leaning over the low wall which separated Barbara's garden from his, surveyed the premises critically. Mrs. Cowell's pigsty was larger than his, and her potato-plot had a sunnier aspect. Then his eyes fell accidentally on the figure of Barbara herself, who happened at that moment to emerge from the house, carrying a basket full of newly washed clothes, which she proceeded to hang up to dry. The sleeves of her bedgown were rolled up high on her plump arms; her striped petticoat was sufficiently short to show a pair of neat little feet, now prudently encased in clogs; her fair hair shone in the sun, and her rosy face—William was just seriously contemplating the rosy face when to his surprise it beamed with smiles of recognition.

'Nice mornin', Mester Lupton,' said Barbara.

William shuffled from one foot to the other, and grunted.

'You haven't got your taters yet, I see,' pursued Mrs. Cowell, judiciously selecting what she considered to be a congenial subject.

'I don't see as it's any one's business but my own whether I've

got my taters or not,' replied William gruffly.

'Of course not,' agreed the little woman cheerily. 'Every one has their own notions, yo' know. I want to get up mine as soon as I can, 'cause Tommy an' me likes 'em pretty new.'

'Wasteful,' said William.

'Is it?' cried Barbara, delighted to have extracted an answer that was not absolutely a rebuff. 'Dun yo' really think so, Mester Lupton? I never heard that before. I allus thought, yo' know, once they was growed to their full size a body might eat 'em any time.'

'How are you to tell if they'n growed to their full size or not?' he retorted, with a laugh. This seemed to him a very

brilliant repartee.

'Well, not wi'out gettin' 'em up, yo' know,' said Barbara demurely. 'Dun you reckon taters grows bigger wi' layin' in the ground, same as folks grows owder wi' livin' above it?'

She spoke archly, and in the case of a man like William

Lupton to be prematurely arch is fatal.

He immediately withdrew into his shell, and remarked, frowning, that he didn't think nowt at all about it.

A somewhat long pause ensued—Barbara looking at the man with a puzzled expression, and he still shuffling uneasily from one foot to the other. Suddenly his brow cleared. He had caught sight of Tommy peeping from behind the door. William felt in his waistcoat pocket and found a penny, which he tipped awkwardly enough over the wall.

'Theer,' he said, 'thou can buy sweeties wi' thot.' Then, without another word or glance, he abruptly turned on his heel and went away.

As soon as Barbara had finished with her wash-tub, she 'cleaned her,' donned her second-best bonnet, and went in search of the Canon.

He was pacing up and down his garden, and paused in some surprise at sight of her.

'What, Barbara, come to terms already?'

Barbara dropped a curtsey and coughed behind her hand.

'Nay, Canon, I've just coom to ax yo' about it. I think theer mun be soom mistake. William an' me ha' had a word or two this mornin', but he never said nowt about coortin'.'

'Oh, as to courting,' returned the Canon, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'you'll have to do all that sort of thing yourself, Barbara. William is not the kind of man who would know how to set about it. You must be patient with him. Let him take his own time and it will all come right, I've no doubt. But don't be in a hurry.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Cowell, in a slightly aggrieved tone, 'I'm noan in sich a 'urry as all thot cooms to, but it mak's a body feel unsettled—thot's wheer it is. I'd like to know if it is to be, or if it isn't.'

'Which of us can tell what the future holds in store for us?' quoth the Canon oracularly. 'Go home to Tommy, there's a good soul. Do your duty and trust in Providence, and you'll soon find out if this affair will come to anything or not.'

Barbara went home, much dissatisfied. She was a matter-of-fact person and liked a course of action to be clearly marked out for her. As it was, it seemed that the only piece of practical advice which the Canon had given her was that if she wanted to marry William Lupton she must do all the courting herself. This seemed to her a little hard, for she was naturally of a modest and retiring disposition; but she was not the woman, neverthe-

less, to disregard the counsels of her pastor in a matter which so

intimately regarded her own happiness.

She grew thoughtful when she had regained her home, and resumed her working dress, and stood for some time, with her hands on her hips, revolving in her mind the best mode of inaugurating proceedings. The results of her cogitations were extremely practical. Taking up duster and broom, she went straight to Lupton's door. It was locked, but the key lay, as she knew, on the sill just within the partly open window. With a beating heart she let herself in, pausing in dismay after she crossed the threshold.

'Eh, dear!' she cried, clapping her hands together. 'Did anybody ever see sich a litter in all their days? My word, William Lupton,' apostrophising the absent lord of this untidy domain, 'it's about time you got soombry to do for yo'!'

She set to work, however, with vigour and goodwill, and after an hour or two the place was hardly recognisable. Barbara gathered together her paraphernalia and chuckled to herself.

'He'll be takken-to when he cooms a-whoam! He'll scarce

know what to think on't,' she said.

Locking the door and replacing the key, she went back to prepare for her own tea, leaving her house-door a little ajar, however, in the hopes of being able to gather some notion of William's first impressions of her handiwork.

But she was disappointed. He closed his door with a bang after he had entered, and though his slow steps could be plainly heard through the thin partition, they conveyed nothing of the condition of the man's mind. Mrs. Cowell would, nevertheless, have been both surprised and gratified could she have known the effect she had produced. When William saw the well-swept room, the fire burning brightly on the hearth, and the kettle, previously well scoured and polished, steaming merrily on the hob; when, glancing round, he observed that the table was spread ready for his evening meal, that the bread-and-butter was cut, the cheese laid out, cup and saucer and plate prepared, the very lamp placed in the centre of the board all ready to be lighted, even in William Lupton's sluggish veins there came a glow of satisfaction.

'This,' he exclaimed, 'is gradely!' Sitting down before the table, he fell to thinking of what the Canon had said. 'No doubt a mon is mich coomfortabler when there is a woman to do for him. Canon knew what he was talking about.' All that was

wanting to the picture he had drawn was the personality of the cosy little wife herself waiting to welcome her spouse.

William was not an imaginative man, but for a moment or two his fancy conjured up a vision of Barbara's figure and placed it in the empty chair opposite his own. The wraith of Tommy, her attendant sprite, hovered about him also for a brief space. But, nevertheless, these illusions did not suggest any immediate necessity for taking practical steps to convert them into realities. There was time enough, he thought. He was never the man to be hurried, and such a matter as this required a deal of thinking and unbethinking. Meanwhile it was uncommon good-natured of Mrs. Cowell to have 'done for him' in that neighbourly way, and one good turn deserved another—no doubt of that. He would see if there were any little odd jobs about her premises that wanted taking in hand.

When Barbara opened her back-door next morning, she was surprised to find that the potatoes, which she had looked forward to 'getting' with much labour and difficulty as soon as she should find spare time, had been all dug up and neatly banked in the conventional manner. William Lupton, who had not expected her to appear so early on the scene, was at that moment engaged in smoothing the earth over the top, his face wearing an expression of solemn satisfaction the while.

'Well, I'm sure,' she exclaimed, advancing joyfully towards him, 'this is kind! Eh, I scarce know——' She paused, for William, looking round with a scared face, dropped the spade, and, muttering inarticulately that it would be 'reet enough,' fairly took to his heels.

Mrs. Cowell picked up the spade, and meditatively patted the grave-shaped mound: they were getting on, she thought. After a few minutes she went in, fancying as she passed through her own door that she caught a glimpse of William peering at her from behind his.

When he had gone to work, Mrs. Cowell again betook herself to his house, and after having 'straightened things' downstairs, performed the same good offices in the upper rooms, carrying off with her, moreover, a good many of William's garments which stood obviously in need of repairs.

William, on his return, discovered what had taken place, and instead of calling to thank the widow in person, contented himself with cleaning out her pigsty.

On the following day Barbara washed the greater part of

William's linen, and William mended her water-tub. On the next she 'raddled' his tiled floor, and he 'riddled' her cinder-

heap.

Mrs. Cowell was not altogether satisfied with the progress of events. Like the farmer in the time-honoured anecdote, who failed to appreciate the claret at a rent-dinner, she felt that 'they didn't seem to get no forrarder.' But one evening, on returning from an errand in the village, Tommy imparted a fact to her which caused her to feel more sanguine.

'Mester Lupton's bin an' made a hole in the wall,' announced the child, pointing to the lath and plaster partition before

mentioned.

'Never!' whispered Barbara in astonishment.

'He did,' insisted Tommy; 'I saw th' end of a big thing same

as a corkscrew coom through jest now.'

Barbara did not dare to look round. Who knew but at that very moment William's eye might not be affixed to the peep-hole in question? She hurriedly prepared a treacle 'butty,' and told the boy he must have been dreaming; but presently, during the course of her preparations for tea, she managed to pass close to the part of the wall he had pointed out, and covertly investigated it. A small round hole did indeed appear in its whitewashed surface just at what might be the level of a man's eye. This mark of interest on William's part was flattering, certainly, but the situation was not without its drawbacks; Barbara would have to be very cautious and remember that, whenever her lover was at home, his watchful gaze might be upon her.

Thereupon ensued a little comedy, played nightly by Mrs. Cowell and the unconscious Tommy, while Lupton standing in the dark on the other side of the partition formed an appreciative

audience of one.

This innocent performance was attended with one great advantage. William found it so attractive that he ceased to betake himself of an evening to the Thornleigh Arms, and hastened homewards instead to apply his eye to the gimlet-hole. He did not weary of the perpetual repetition of the same simple scenes; on the contrary, he appeared to find ever more and more interest in them. He liked to see Barbara and Tommy together, watching the mother with interest, when she combed out the child's curls or nursed him on her knee; but afterwards, when the little fellow had said his prayers and gone to bed, there was no less fascination in the sight of Barbara herself sitting alone by the hearth, the

lamplight gilding her bent head, while her fingers busied themselves with the patching or mending of some garment, not infrequently one of William's own. He was so well content with the present state of affairs that he found himself in no hurry to bring them to a climax. Barbara continued to 'do for him,' and to make him exceedingly comfortable, and, as he invariably contrived to repay each good office by another, no debt of gratitude weighed upon his conscience. But Barbara began to find the position more and more trying, and at last resolved to give her neighbour a pretty broad hint. She made a cake one day, a very rich specimen of the kind known in Lancashire as 'bun-loaf.' Wrapping it up in paper, she called Tommy:

'Tak' this in to Mester Lupton, lad, and tell him as I 'ope he'll like it. An' say I'd as soon as not mak' a weddin' cake

next.'

Tommy stared, and nodded.

'Sitha, Tommy, dunnot forget to say about the weddin' cake.'
Tommy shook his head, and stretched out his arms for the packet. Barbara, listening breathlessly, heard the child knock and William open the door; then Tommy's shrill voice pattering out her message; but not one word of reply could she catch, let her strain her ears as she might. The boy returned presently, gleefully munching an immense slice of bun-loaf.

'What did Mester Lupton say?' asked his mother anxiously.
'He didn't say nowt, not till I were gone out o't' door, an'
then he called me back and axed "Wilto have a bit, mon?" and
I said, "Ah," an' he cut me a bit, an' towd me to be off awhoam.'

'Eh, dear!' groaned Barbara, sinking into a chair.

She had been silently brooding for a few moments when a heavy single knock once more raised her hopes. Had her final move been successful, and was the barrier of her lover's coyness at last broken down? But no, on opening her door she only caught sight of William's vanishing figure, and almost tumbled over a large package which he had placed on the threshold. It was a ham. Mrs. Cowell almost cried as she carried it indoors. She was 'fair aggravated,' as she said to herself. Would things always go on like this? All the neighbours had come to know of their odd courtship, and not a few of them laughed and told poor Barbara in their friendly way that it would 'never come to nowt,' and advised her to 'give ower countin' on't.' As the poor woman now gazed at the large, fat, pallid ham, she too began to think she was wasting her time. Almost worse than having her benefits

thrown back on her hands was this system of reprisals. She would

stand it no longer.

Taking up the offending ham, she went quickly to William's door. He opened it but a very little way in answer to her knock, and did not invite her to enter.

'What did yo' give me this ham for, Mester Lupton?' she asked sharply.

Through the chink she could see William scratching his jaw, as though in surprise.

'If it cooms to thot,' he returned presently, 'what did yo' give me that cake for?'

Barbara blushed.

'Well, seein' as yo're all alone here, wi' nob'ry to do nowt for yo', I thought it nobbut kind,' she faltered.

'So it were, very kind,' assented William, and there he

stopped.

'And then yo' mun goo an' give me this 'ere great 'am,' cried Barbara. 'Same as if I wanted payin' for 't. 'Tisn't neighbourly, Mester Lupton.'

William opened the door a little wider.

'Nay, nay, yo' munnot tak' it thot way,' he said. 'I bethought mysel' as yo're nobbut a lone woman, wi' nob'ry to work for yo' an' keep yo', nobbut yo'rsel'—an' I thought the 'am 'ud happen coom in 'andy.'

'Is that all?' asked she in a low voice. 'Well, I am a lone woman, Mester Lupton; an' yo're a lone man, aren't yo'?'

'Ah,' said William, closing the door to a little.

'An' so I thought as th' best thing we could do,' began Barbara. She broke off. Really, if he wouldn't say something himself, now she could not help him any more.

William eyed her reflectively.

'The best thing we can do,' he said, after a pause, 'is for yo'

to keep that 'am, and me to keep yo'r cake.'

'I don't want yo'r 'am!' cried Barbara, almost throwing it on the doorstep. 'I've had enough o' this! Good-bye, Mester Lupton.' She flounced into her own house and banged the door before William could rejoin.

He went slowly back to the kitchen and contemplated for a moment Mrs. Cowell's cake. Ought he to give it back? No; he didn't see why he should. He would find her something else which she would happen fancy better than the ham. He betook himself next to his peep-hole. Barbara was sitting with her

apron over her head, her bosom heaving convulsively under the folds of her bedgown, her whole attitude one of despair. At the sight William forgot to be cautious, and, applying his mouth to the little hole, shouted out:

'Give ower, Mrs. Cowell! Give ower!'

Barbara jumped up and stamped her foot.

'I'll ha' no more of this as 'how't is!' she cried, addressing herself indignantly to the orifice where she now supposed William's eye to be. 'Yo' ought to be ashamed o' yo'rsel'—peepin' and spyin' at a poor woman as hasn't nob'ry to stand up for her! I wunnot thooal it, an' so I tell yo'.'

She flew to the cupboard in the corner by the fire, and after some fumbling among the shelves produced a cork, which she proceeded to trim and pare with fingers that trembled with anger. William followed her movements anxiously, keeping his eye still glued to his peep-hole. Mrs. Cowell came quite close; her round face, glowing with wrath, hovered for a moment opposite to William's, then all was darkness! She had stopped up the hole!

To say that William felt blank is but feebly to describe his state of mind. He had grown so much accustomed to the sight of the cheery little fireside next door that he had come to look upon it more or less as his own, and felt himself entitled to a share of the family life which he could thus contemplate without committing himself. Returning to his own lonely hearth, and sitting down in his elbow-chair, he fell to thinking lugubriously of what his fate would be on the morrow. Mrs. Cowell was thoroughly angry—there was no doubt of that. He would have to 'do for himself' now, or else submit to live as before in discomfort and disorder. And Tommy! He had grown used to Tommy's frequent visits, and had, in his grim way, enjoyed the child's prattle and sunny presence, but now, as he groaned to himself, it would be 'mich' if Tommy were ever allowed to cross his threshold.

He looked at the cake and heaved a deep sigh. Then he cut off a little bit, and nibbled it. It was a very good cake.

'Theer's nowt I welly believe that woman couldn't turn her hand to.'

He paused, turning his head a little on one side. 'Hoo'd mak' a weddin' cake as well as the best, I dare say.'

After meditating a few moments more, he brought down his fist upon the table with a bang, rose, straightened himself, and walked across the room to the partition. All was silent on the opposite side: the child must be in bed, and Barbara alone.

Drawing his pipe from his pocket, William poked the stem through the hole, and the cork fell with a little thud on Barbara's tiled floor. She heard it, but, having by this time somewhat cooled down, deemed it best to 'take no notice.' After a short interval a 'still small voice' fell upon her ear.

'Mrs. Cowell,' said the voice.

She sat up and looked round; there were traces of tears about her pretty blue eyes.

'Well?' said she.

'Mrs. Cowell, I reckon yo' could mak' a gradely weddin' cake.'

Barbara blushed, and her face dimpled all over. 'I reckon I could,' she said.

'Well, then,' resumed William, manfully screwing himself up to the point—literally screwing himself up to the point, for it required a certain amount of dexterity to fit his mouth properly to the hole—'I were thinkin' yo' might mak' one soon for yo' an' me—and we could bile th' 'am. Ah, th' 'am 'ud coom in, wouldn't it?'

'Nicely,' agreed Mrs. Cowell. She paused, hesitating a moment. 'When shall I start makkin' th' cake, think yo'?'

There was a pause on the other side.

'Theer's no such hurry, is theer?' came presently in rather weak tones.

Barbara stooped, and picked up the cork.

'No hurry at all,' she assented blandly. 'I'll nobbut keep

this here hole stopped till yo' can mak' up yo'r mind.'

'Nay, nay,' cried William, in a great flurry, 'dunnot do that, Barbara. We'll—we'll get the job ower as soon as we con. I'll tell Canon to begin o' shoutin' us straight off, an' in a two-three weeks we can get wed.'

'Thot 'll do very well,' returned Barbara approvingly.

'An' yo'll noan stop up th' 'ole, will yo'?' he pleaded; 'I feel awful 'onely when I cannot have a look at yo'.'

'Well, then, how'd it be if yo' was to step round here, Mester Lupton?' suggested Barbara. 'Then yo' could look at me wi' both e'en.'

She threw out the hint diffidently, for she much feared that any sudden move on her part might scare this newly caught bird.

'Step round?' echoed William.

'Ah,' said Barbara; 'it's mich comfortabler o' this side,

an' so yo'd find. Jest look through an' see what a nice fire I've made me, an' theer's a big armchair. Han yo' 'ad yo'r supper?'

'Nay,' said William, 'I 'adn't begun when yo'r Tommy coom.'

'Eh, dear o' me, it will be cowd then. Coom in here an' I'll warm yo' up a bit. I 'adn't th' 'eart to eat mysel' till now, but coom—we's ha' a bit together.'

There was a long delay, during which William, peering through the hole, took in every detail of the cosy scene of Mrs. Cowell's operations; then, without another word, he walked away from the partition. Barbara gasped. Had she, indeed, been in too great a hurry, and was William beginning already to repent? Her suspense grew almost unendurable as time passed, and the man neither spoke nor appeared inclined to avail himself of her invitation. But, after a quarter of an hour had elapsed, she heard to her great joy his steps cross the room and resound on the paved path without. Running to the door, she opened it before he had time to knock. There stood William, resplendent in his Sunday clothes. As the light fell upon his head it showed that his locks had been plentifully smeared with pomatum. His whole appearance, indeed, was so festive that Barbara was quite taken aback. But before she could recover from her amazement he crossed the threshold and caught her by both hands.

'I bethought me,' he explained, with a sheepish grin, 'thot sin' I were in for it I met as well do a bit o' coortin' same's another mon.'

And really, as Mrs. Cowell subsequently remarked, once he were fair started he made an uncommon good hand of it.

M. E. FRANCIS.

The Lobster at Home.

IT was, you will remember, the erroneous opinion of Alice (in Wonderland) that whiting were fish with their tails in their mouths. That biological mistake was a natural result of the culinary or purely domestic conception of animal life. In like manner, I believe, a great many people are still of opinion that lobsters are habitually and normally red—which is a rudimentary blunder of the same character as if one were to suppose that chickens swam in a sea of onion sauce as their native element, or that turkeys were infested with parasitic truffles. To combat such insufficient notions of crustacean life in the shallow seas it may be well to attend a lobster At Home off the coasts of Britain.

The common lobster who receives you in his rocky house is a ten-legged crustacean, with a large, powerful, and very muscular tail. This tail it is which marks off most distinctly the lobster group (including the crayfish, prawn, and shrimp) from their degenerate relations the mere crawling crabs, which are practically tailless. The difference in shape, again, is ultimately dependent upon a profound difference of habit and manner. All the lobster kind are more or less of swimmers, and they use their powerful tail with immense effect for jumping or darting through the water when disturbed, as well as for a gentler method of propulsion by fin-like flappers, to which I shall recur a little later. They may be regarded, in fact, from the point of view of habit, as great marine fleas; and this power of jumping or bounding through the sea is their most marked characteristic. The crabs, on the other hand, do not leap or swim in the adult condition; they merely crawl with a rather awkward motion along the bottom. Hence they have walking legs more developed than the lobster's; their body is round, flat, and compressed; but the little shrivelled tail, reduced in their case to a bare shrunken relic, is doubled up under the body so inconspicuously that it probably altogether escapes the notice of the purely culinary or Epicurean

observer. Both groups are descended from a common ancestor; but the crabs have taken so exclusively to walking that their tails have atrophied till they are reduced at last to mere sheaths for the eggs and other reproductive organs; while the lobsters and prawns have taken to jumping freely on the open, and used their tails so much that these leaping organs have at last developed into the largest and most important part of the animal.

Our English lobster is a beautiful, glossy, bluish-black creature. of iridescent sheen, with a scheme of colour not remotely reminding one of the mingled hues on the back of the swallow. Even when taken from the water his melting tints are very remarkable: but when seen at home, among his rocky haunts, and with the glaucous green glow of the sea shed lustrously over him, he is as magnificent a creature of his sort as nature has developed. When boiled, indeed, he turns at once to the vulgar and uniform red of the British soldier; but in his native state he is subtly and indescribably mottled with patches of dark blue and of cloudy black, which merge by imperceptible degrees into one another. Looked down upon through the water from above, he is seen among the crags as a black lurking mass, just projecting from a tunnel or crevice of the serpentine stacks, which he fits to a shade; whilst his front claws or crushers, his head and stalked eyes, and his tremulous antennæ alone stand out on the watch for prey beyond the general surface of his sheltering rock-wall. But beheld on the level, as one sees him in the aquarium (which is, of course, the only fair way to judge the charms of submerged animals), he becomes at once a far more imposing creature. His hues are then even more vivid than those of the burnished swallow's back: and his great black eyes gleam out from his lair with the watchful intelligence of the patient hunter.

Your lobster is an athlete of no small pretensions. He has three distinct modes of progression, and at least three sets of locomotive organs adapted to them. He walks or crawls on the sea bottom; he swims on the open; and he darts or jumps backward with his powerful tail muscles. Each of these modes requires at our hands a separate consideration.

The lobster's legs, all told, are ten in number. But only eight of these are largely used for walking. The front pair, or big claws, have been specialised, as in the crab and most others of the higher crustaceans, into prehensile organs for catching and crushing the prey. Their use is obvious. Lobsters feed largely off mollusks of various sorts, and other hard-shelled marine

animals; in order to be able to break or crush the shells of these, and so get at the softer flesh within, they have acquired such large and very muscular nippers or pincers. That is not all. however; not only have the two front legs been differentiated and specialised from the eight others in this manner, but also, by a rare exception to the symmetry of the body, the right claw has been specialised from the left, each being intended to perform a distinct function. One is a scissors; the other is a mill: one is a cutter; the other is a cracker. As a rule the right claw is the slenderer and longer; it has tooth-like projections or serrated edges on its two nipping faces, and it is rather adapted for biting and severing than for crushing or grinding. The left claw, on the other hand, is usually thicker, heavier, and rounder; its muscles are more powerful; and in place of sharp teeth it has blunt tubercles or hammers of different sizes; it acts, in fact. more like a nut-cracker than like teeth or a saw; it is a smashing organ. Nevertheless you will find it interesting to observe, by noting the lobsters served to you at table, that this differentiation has hardly as yet become quite constant; for sometimes it is the right claw that displays the hammer-like nut-cracker type, and the left that acts as nipper and biter; while sometimes no difference occurs at all, both claws alike being sharp-toothed or blunthammered in the same specimen.

Behind these two specialised forelegs or claws, which are really connected with the mouth and the capture of food rather than with the process of locomotion, come the eight true legs, employed in walking. On shore, indeed, or as you see the lobster lie on the smooth flat slab of a fishmonger's shop, these legs are truly but feeble members. At home in the salt water. however, for which, of course, they are primarily adapted, they present a very different appearance. The buoyant medium supports and floats the heavy body and claws, and the animal moves along on the tips of his eight feet with a peculiarly graceful gliding motion. He hardly walks: he seems rather to slip through the yielding water. His nimbleness under such circumstances surprises those who think of him only as a weighty and armour-clad creature, forgetting that in his own atmosphere (if I may venture on the phrase) he is buoyed and upheld by the sea that surrounds him on every side. When walking on the bottom in this way, in search of prey, he extends his big front claws obliquely before him, so as to offer the least possible resistance to the mass of water; six of his legs he uses as true legs alone; the

last pair of all he employs rather as picks or stilts, if I may use such a metaphor, pushing them firmly into the sand or pebbles on the bottom, and steadying by their aid his forward motion.

The second set of locomotive organs are the swimmerets, or fin-like appendages under the animal's tail, each of which acts as an oar or paddle. They consist of a short stalk or handle, fitted with two flat wide blades. When the lobster walks on the bottom, he extends his tail unfolded behind him, and gently waves these swimmerets like a fish's fins to assist and guide his forward movement. They thus play the part at once of oar and rudder, though the latter function is still more efficiently performed by the expanded organs which terminate the tail. But the lobster can also use the swimmerets to swim with alone, independently of the crawling or creeping legs; and though this motion is but slow and slight it has a peculiarly graceful and mysterious appearance. A swimming lobster seems to glide through space with fairy elegance. As a rule, however, the lobster sticks to the bottom, and only swims obliquely downward for very short distances from its home in the rock to the sands beneath it. Nor is this the only function of the swimmerets. Nature, we all know, is economical of organs; and therefore we need not be surprised to learn that in the female lobster the swimmerets are further utilised to serve as supports for the eggs. or 'berry,' in a way which will arrest our attention a little later.

And now we come to the third and by far the most powerful organ of locomotion in the lobster, the large and very muscular tail. Strange to say, however, this organ acts in the opposite direction from the other two; by its aid the animal is able to spring rapidly, not forward, but backward. Why backward? Well, the tail is not used as an ordinary means of locomotion at all, but is reserved for purposes of sudden retreat and defensive action. As the lobster walks about over the hunting-grounds near his lair (for of course he has preserves of his own around his estate), he keeps his long antennæ, or feelers, constantly waving up and down before him, so as to give him warning of the approach of a dainty morsel or a stronger enemy. On these rather than on his imperfect stalked eyes he seems to rely most for information and for danger signals. If the offending object be not big enough or active enough to frighten him, he stands up menacingly on his walking legs and puts himself in the exact attitude of a boxer. One large claw he holds for defence in front of his head; with the other he strikes out against the hostile object, and strives to crush or kill it. Fishermen sometimes draw lobsters from their holes by presenting them in this way with a blade of an oar; the unsuspicious crustacean seizes it with his claw and refuses to let go, sometimes even permitting himself through pure obstinacy to be drawn out of the water. But when the enemy is one of whom the lobster is afraid he retreats precipitately by bending his big tail with a spasmodic jerk, which drives him backwards through the water at the rate of twenty-five feet in a second. In clear water you can see them dart past like lightning when disturbed or terrified. In this peculiar backward jump the animal is also largely aided by the fan-shaped, rudder-like organs at the end of the tail.

As a rule, when thus alarmed, the lobster darts away backward into deeper water, where he is not likely to hurt himself by knocking against hard foreign bodies. But he has also no small delicacy of adjustment in this matter of jumping, and if near his own home—for every lobster has a recognised house of his own in some cranny of the rocks—he will fling himself into it backward with an accuracy of aim like that of a swallow or sand martin swooping down upon its nest from a considerable distance. The tail is thus an organ of defensive retreat, and its large size is the index of its use to its possessor.

It may be interesting to the culinary naturalist to observe in passing that this distribution of the locomotive organs is mainly answerable for the varieties and disposition in the flesh of the lobster. The large crushing claws, constantly used in feeding, have firm but not hard or stringy flesh, and are much more digestible than the other portions. The small walking legs, having relatively little work to do, are supplied with smaller muscles, distributed in an intricate and peculiar network of thin shelly material. But the big and powerful tail, employed for the violent act of leaping, and constantly exerted in the state of nature, has correspondingly hard and strong muscles, which form the mass of the edible portion, but are relatively indigestible through their closeness and toughness. In the crab, on the other hand, which merely crawls, we eat mainly the claws and the lesser leg-muscles.

Lobsters are essentially nocturnal animals, lurking for the most part in their holes during the day, and coming out to feed on the sands by night. It is for this reason, no doubt, that they depend so little upon their imperfect eyes, all the more so as they inhabit a depth of water where light becomes of very slight im-

portance. On the other hand, it is probable that the antennæ end in organs of smell of a delicately discriminative sort, and that by their aid the lobster knows friend from foe and food-stuff from enemy.

Our crustacean not only roams the sea bottom in search of food, but also digs and burrows in the sand and mud, like a maritime mole, in pursuit of shell-fish. These he catches and crushes with his hammer-like claw, extracting the soft parts to eat at leisure. But he is also an angler after fish, which form, perhaps, the chief portion of his diet; and he preys to a great extent upon his cousins the crabs, whose thinner shells and more exposed habits make them an easy booty. In aquariums lobsters also clearly display cannibal habits; if one lobster loses a claw his neighbours unanimously turn and rend him. That this evil habit exists still more abundantly in the native state we have unfortunately more than ample evidence, for in the stomachs of old specimens the shells of their juniors and even of hen lobsters have been frequently recognised. Such ungallant conduct almost seems to justify the extreme sentence of boiling alive, to which lobsters caught by man are usually subjected. As to the question whether their prey is living or dead, lobsters are far from particular. All is fish that comes to their net. They rank, in fact, among the chief scavengers of the sea, and though they habitually catch and eat living animals they do not despise dead and decaying specimens. They are at once the tigers and the hyenas of their world; they double the parts of the eagle and the vulture.

The early history of the lobster is full of interest. He undergoes in his infancy a series of metamorphoses at least as curious, as varied, and as instructive as those of the frog and the butterfly. The eggs, which are deep semi-transparent green in the living animal, not bright red, as we see them when boiled, are laid in early autumn. But the careful mother does not turn her offspring loose at once on a cold and unfeeling world; she fastens the 'berry' sedulously to her own swimmerets, by means of gummy adhesive threads, and carries it about on her journeys for several months thus closely attached to her own person. Meanwhile the motion of the swimmerets assists in aërating the eggs and promoting maturation. By June or July of the succeeding summer the young fry are hatched out, being rather less than half an inch long at the moment of escape from the leathery egg-shell. The hen lobster lays from 2,000 to 12,000 of these little round eggs; but out of that large family only about 1,000 usually hatch out, while not more than three or four of the whole brood in all probability ever arrive at maturity. The rest are killed by natural causes in infancy, or devoured by their own kind and other enemies.

And here we get a measure of the ferocious cannibalism which, I grieve to say, prevails among our subjects. Young crayfish, first cousins of the lobsters, have hooked forceps claws, as Huxley pointed out, by means of which they cling, after hatching, in little colonies to their mother's swimmerets. Thus the maternal crayfish crawls about her native stream, like the kangaroo, carrying her young ones with her; while the baby crayfish, good brothers and sisters, derive shelter and food from this motherly solicitude. But the bloodthirsty young lobsters, as soon as hatched, instantly disperse themselves with a sort of natural repulsion, after the curious fashion of a brood of baby spiders, and for the selfsame reason. As Dr. Herrick, the author of a learned and exhaustive work on the American lobster (a species which differs but little from our own), rightly remarks, 'a swarming or gregarious habit would be fatal to this creature, on account of its inborn pugnacity and cannibalism.' The family disperses to avoid being eaten by its unnatural brothers.

Our young lobster, once more, emerges from the egg not lobster-like in form, but as a lobster tadpole or larva. In this its earlier avatar it is an active, free-swimming pelagic creature, not unlike, in general look at a first rough glance, to the familiar mosquito larva-with which, of course, I need hardly say it has no real affinity. Its early history, which has only of late been traced in detail, is far too varied and minute for popular apprehension; it must suffice to say that the baby lobster swims openly on the surface of the water, and undergoes several moults, each accompanied by marked changes of structure and appearance, before attaining its adult form and its final walking and leaping habits. In the earliest stage our larva is quite transparent, about half an inch long, and possessed of grotesquely big eyes, such as befit a free-swifnming, surface-haunting animal; at this level it nearly approaches a much lower and presumably ancestral form of crustacean development. Very young lobsters subsist mainly upon killing and eating one another, which is the survival of the fittest reduced to its simplest and most naked terms. The family utilises its less active members for the development of the more powerful. At each moult, however, the animal grows more and more lobster-like in shape, while recapitulating, as it seems, the various stages in the evolution of its kind from a very primitive crustacean progenitor. During all this time our larvæ are diurnal not nocturnal in habit; they therefore depend more largely upon

sight than upon smell as the leader among the senses.

Even when the young lobster reaches the full lobster form, however, he is still far from adult; he goes on growing for many months, or even years. But he now quits the surface and takes entirely to a nocturnal life on the ill-lighted sea bottom, for which his existing locomotive organs and his adult senses are specially adapted. Still he continues to moult or cast his outer shell—many times yearly in the very young, once a year in the adult, less frequently still in old and thoroughly hardened specimens. This moulting is, of course, necessitated by the very conditions of growth themselves, for an animal encased in such a coat of solid armour must either not grow at all or else cast off its mail and renew it periodically. Naturally the lobster follows the last of these two plans; his moulting is a result and accompaniment of growth.

Odd as it may sound to say so, the animal grows before, not after, he casts his old hard shell—that is to say, he makes new cells and tissues, which are not at once filled out, but which are intended to plim to their full dimensions as soon as he has got rid of his binding and confining external skeleton. When the critical moment at last arrives, a new soft shell grows entire within the older and harder one; and the animal then withdraws himself, leg by leg, claw by claw, and swimmeret by swimmeret, out of the enveloping coat of mail which covers him. The shedding of the old coat is complete and absolute; not a fragment remains; even the apparently internal hard portions are cast off with the rest, for the entire covering forms one continuous piece, the interior portions being really, so to speak, folds of the skin inserted inward. An entire new skeleton has already grown within the old one, but exceedingly soft and flexible in texture, and the body becomes so almost fluid or jelly-like (not in structure, but in power of compression and extension) that even the big claws are drawn out through the narrow apertures of the joints in a perfectly marvellous manner. After a longer or shorter period of muscular paroxysm, the soft lobster at last disengages itself entirely from the dead shell, and emerges upon the world a new and defenceless fleshy creature. The whole cast skeleton, unruptured in any part, but disengaged by lifting up the body-piece where it joins the tail, looks exactly like an entire dead lobster.

Immediately after the moult the apparent growth takes place with extraordinary rapidity. Recent investigators have shown that this rapid growth depends upon the absorption of water into the blood and tissues through the soft new shell. For at the moment when the lobster emerges from his old coat the new one is already fully formed in every part beneath it; the skeleton needs only hardening matter in order to solidify it into a complete suit of armour, like the old one, but larger. So far as its living matter is concerned the lobster is now really bigger than before; he requires just water to fill him out and lime to harden his newer and larger shell; but when these have done their respective work he has completed his growth till the next moulting period. He thus grows, as it were, by fits and starts at measured intervals.

Moulting, however, is both dangerous and expensive. Many lobsters die naturally in the process; others are eaten up by unkindly neighbours of their own species or by foreign enemies during their defenceless convalescence. It is commonly said by fishermen and others that lobsters after moulting retire to their lairs, and pass through a period of complete inactivity till their shell has hardened. This idea, however, is probably due to the misconception that the new shell is formed after, not before, the shedding of the old one. As a matter of fact the soft lobster does really retire as far as possible from vulgar observation and too curious inquiry during his softest time; but he nevertheless ventures out by night to feed, a point rendered certain by the comparative frequency with which soft specimens are caught round the coasts in lobster pots. But the new shell hardens rather rapidly, partly because the lobster has providently laid by in readiness in his body a supply of lime in easily soluble forms, and partly because the neophyte swallows fragments of shells and other calcareous matter, as Dr. Herrick points out, which he dissolves in his stomach and uses up in hardening the new coat of mail. Thus in a few days the fresh shell has acquired a leathery consistency, and by the end of six weeks it is as hard as the old one.

Closely connected with this habit of moulting is the still more peculiar power known as 'recrescence'—the faculty of reproducing lost limbs and organs. Lobsters and crabs, as we have seen, are highly pugnacious and aggressive creatures, which fight to the death with one another and with alien enemies; but if seized by the nipper claws they seem instinctively to recognise

that further fighting is useless, and instead of continuing the hopeless battle they cast off the offending limb and retreat without it, thinking it better to lose one claw than life and freedom. Nature provides beforehand, in fact, a definite place where such sacrifices should be made, by making a break at the base of the leg; the ruptured surface hardly bleeds at all, while in a short time a new claw buds forth from the severed end and replaces the old one. The antennæ and small legs also grow again when broken off by accidental injury.

This fact of recrescence, found also in lizards and some other animals, and common in plants, is of profound interest in philosophical biology, as Mr. Herbert Spencer was the first to point out; for it suggests the idea that the formative material or protoplasm in every organism has a natural tendency to reproduce in its entirety the native form of the original creature, much as crystals have a tendency to precipitate from their mother liquid in certain characteristic or specific shapes. When this ideal entire form is mutilated the common plasm rebuilds the broken part; and Mr. Spencer struck out the luminous idea that just in the same way the egg or germ tends to rebuild by its own internal energies the shape of such a body as that from which it was originally derived. The mystery of birth becomes thus to some extent a mere special case of the mystery of the rebuilding or recrescence of the body. Assimilated matter, once taken into the organism, has the power either of restoring that organism complete or of forming new organisms essentially similar. This is the most pregnant hint as to the true nature of heredity that has yet been thrown out by any biologist.

Only two other species of true lobster beside our own are 'known to science'—the American and the Cape lobsters. They differ in petty details alone from the European form; the American kind is noticeable chiefly for the much larger size of its crushing claws, a fact which may have struck the prudent housewife in the course of opening and currying the tinned lobster of commerce. I apologise, however, for the obtrusion of such a fact in the present article, for I am prepared to admit that no crustacean is really at home when boiled and potted. I think the reason for this abnormal development of the crushing claws in the American species must probably be sought in the generally harder nature of the solid mollusks on which it feeds. Our English species seems to live mainly on true fish, soft crabs, and such relatively thin-shelled mollusks as mussels, razor fish, and cockle-like forms. But the

American lobster, a great burrower after buried sand mollusks, makes a large part of his living out of the very hard clams and other solid-shelled mollusks of the western shore, exposed to the terrible roll of the Atlantic waves on the exposed coasts of Maine, Massachusetts, and Nova Scotia. He therefore needs larger and more powerful claws in order to crush these very tough food-stuffs. Huge heaps of clam shells are often observed at the end of the lobsters' burrows in the West, as are the remains of our less protected English shell-fish at the mouths of the holes frequented by our own species.

The so-called Norway lobster, occasionally taken on the British coast, is a much more distant cousin, belonging to a separate genus, Nephrops, with slenderer claws, well adapted for picking food out of crannies in rocks, and is distinguished by a somewhat more prawn-like and graceful aspect. As to the spiny lobster, or langouste, dignified by science with the imposing classical title of Palinurus, he is still less of a relation, more South European in type, and found in Britain only on our southern shores. He poses as a sort of sea hedgehog, being covered all over his body with projecting spines, and adapted rather for defence than defiance. His marked peculiarity lies in the fact that he has no crushing claws at all, being content with ten almost similar walking legs, the first pair of which scarcely differ in any way from the others. In this curious form we may probably recognise the modern representative of some primitive and less developed ancestor, little given to attacking hard food or enemies, and therefore unprovided with fighting or crushing members. In the more advanced lobsters, on the other hand, the front claws have been progressively modified and specialised for this important function. The spiny coat of Palinurus points, no doubt, in the same direction. For animals which can fight, like the lion or the bull, do not generally need such passive protections; it is usually skulkers and belated relics, like the porcupine and the hedgehog, which have survived by acquiring these unwarlike armours.

The true lobsters are thus seen on the whole to be the princes and heads of crustacean nature. In a single word, they are a dominant family. Where they live they rule. Few enemies can tackle them; their most dangerous foes are those of their own household. Armed offensively with their mighty claws, armed defensively with their impenetrable carapace, they attack boldly, and fear or shrink from few hostile creatures. Yet they have the power, when alarmed, of beating a rapid and effective retreat with

their muscular tails, or of leaving their claws, when necessary, behind them. They can either carry out a 'strategic movement to the rear' into deeper water, or dart back with a bound to the safety of their rock shelter, where, with body protected and only the armoured head, spiked frontlet, and huge claws projecting, they present a terrific face to the most determined aggressor. No creature of their size is more formidable or better armed. They represent in our seas the highest result of natural selection in the crustacean line, perhaps even the most splendid development of the mailed soldier type now living on our planet. And when seen by the proper light in their native element they are as beautiful in hue and as graceful in movement as they are wonderful in shape and terrible in fighting.

GRANT ALLEN.

A Boyar of the Terrible.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF IVAN THE CRUEL, FIRST TSAR OF RUSSIA.

BY FRED. WHISHAW,
AUTHOR OF 'OUT OF DOORS IN TSARLAND,' ETC.

CHAPTER V.

PRINCESS VERA.

NOT yet fifteen years of age, and in love! This appears somewhat absurd, I know, and yet undoubtedly such was the case; I was certainly in love.

Some persons develop both physically and intellectually earlier than others, and both in bodily and also in mental growth, I was one of the rapid developers. I was at this time fully as tall and probably much stronger than most boys of seventeen years old, and had, moreover, acquired a habit of living within myself, as the result of the want of sympathy between my brothers and me, which habit had probably quickened my intelligence so that I was more of a man than my age would indicate.

And so also in matters of the heart it must be assumed that I was somewhat exotic in my development; for this love which I now felt, was serious enough; it was, indeed, in no way allied to that feeble sentiment usually associated with boys in their first excursions into Cupid's domains, but a strong and ruling passion which wore well and did not disappear with my teens.

So, then, I was in love, and with a Krilof. This was unfortunate; but, as I assured myself at the time, I had no personal share in the family feud existing between her people and mine, neither had she. What was it to us that our ancestors had desired

to cut one another's throats? If she cared as little as I for the ancient quarrel, it should not stand between us for one moment. Nevertheless, since her relatives would probably be of a different opinion, there would be great difficulties in my courtship of this young lady, and the contemplation of these difficulties rendered me sorrowful and dejected as I wandered through the woods on the morning after my first meeting with Vera. I wandered thus every day, accompanied always by Borka and Borza, and mounted invariably upon old Daniel. I knew every yard of the country for miles around, and any one of us four (the two dogs I mean, and the pony and myself), if blindfolded and set down anywhere within ten miles of our home, in the densest forest, would have recognised the spot at a glance and headed straight for Perm. On this particular morning, whether consciously or unconsciously, I rode straight as a line for the village of Kamka, where I had last caught a glimpse of my charmer; but whether I had any settled plan as to my movements when I should arrive there, I cannot say with certainty. I do not think I had. I felt that I must go to Kamka, I believe, and that was all-and to Kamka I went. We hunted a hare or two on the way, but so far as any ardour on my part was concerned, the quarry might have escaped us and welcome. It was seldom, however, that poor pussy escaped when Borka and Borza were in the field and on her tracks; for they were Black Death to all their enemies, were those superb dogs; and, as a matter of fact, two or three hares now hung over Daniel's haunches as he ambled along through the trees.

Close to the village of Kamka, just where a rustic road turns at an angle out of the cultivated land surrounding the huts of the peasants, and enters the forest, I rode straight into a cavalcade of horsemen—three youths, armed with flint guns and accompanied by a whole pack, of a dozen or so, of hounds, of the same breed as my own, which was a common type of dog about our part of the world. There were half a dozen serfs with them, all armed and mounted. One of the well-dressed young men in front of the cavalcade was my acquaintance of yesterday, Prince Andrey Krilof, and I concluded, as soon as I caught sight of the party, that they were going to search for the rest of the wolf-pack of the previous day, and wipe them out of existence with hound and gun. Borka and Borza sniffed and snarled with the strange dogs, and the meeting at first looked as though it must end in a fight; but—as dogs do—they settled the matter amicably and no blood was shed.

We humans were less friendly to one another than they.

Andrey started and flushed when he saw me: 'It is that Stroganof cub,' I heard him tell his companions—his two brothers as I afterwards learned. I took off my cap, perhaps unconsciously; it is a courtesy that every Russian offers to an acquaintance, even peasant to peasant. Only one of the three brothers returned the salutation. This irritated me.

'It is customary to bow to an acquaintance,' I said angrily, 'even though he may have taken the liberty to save your life

without permission.'

'If I am to bow to those Who saved my life, then I must salute these dogs, not you!' said Andrey, impertinently, and he removed his cap and bowed low towards the place where Borka and Borza were comparing notes with the others of their species. Both of his companions laughed at this sally, which struck me as being both rude and ungrateful.

I said nothing, however, and Andrey resumed, taking advan-

tage of my embarrassment.

'And what, may I ask,' he continued, 'brings a Stroganof on two consecutive days into the private domains of the Krilofs?'

'I ride where I please!' I said, blushing.

'And take what you please also, it appears,' cried Krilof, glancing at the game I had with me; 'those hares, I doubt not, were killed upon our land.'

'The land may be yours,' I said, 'but the game that runs or

flies is God's.'

'Not so,' said Andrey; 'it is the gift of God to us who own the soil, just as the wheat is that grows upon it; and he who

hunts the hare upon our land robs us of our own.'

This was a new theory to me, who had hitherto looked upon game of every kind as no man's property, except his who captures or kills it. I laughed mockingly, and said if that was his opinion, he was welcome to his hares; and with the words I took the game and threw it in his face, knocking his cap off.

Andrey flushed red, and grabbed at his hunting-knife as though to attack me, but his brother caught his arm and prevented him. A serf picked up his cap and handed it to him; he glared

at me, muttering something.

'Come away, brother,' said one of the others; 'this is unseemly. He has no manners, but he is a Stroganof, and only a boy.'

'Oh, stay on, if you please,' said I foolishly. 'Boy though I

be, I am man enough for two or three Krilofs, I dare say; and as for manners, this fellow had not the politeness to return my bow until # knocked his cap off for him!'

To this foolishness I received no reply and deserved none, and presently the cavalcade rode away, leaving me. But ere they departed Andrey found occasion to level one more insult at me.

'Matvey,' he said, addressing one of the serfs, 'ride back and warn the Princess Vera to remain at home to-day; there are rogues about, tell her.'

I would gladly have destroyed the speaker, then and there; but, feeling that my case was a hopeless one for the moment, I contented myself with the promise of dire vengeance upon this detestable and ungrateful person at the very first opportunity.

Then, since I was unwilling to appear before my charmer in the character of a rogue, against whom she had been warned to protect herself, I rode slowly and moodily homewards, as angry and vindictive a youth as existed in all Russia.

But anger fades with the hours of day, and true love does not; and when the evening came I had decided that, whether I met and chastised Andrey or not—though of course I hoped that I should—I must in any case ride to Kamka again the next morning, and contrive to catch a glimpse of my princess; for I felt that my heart would certainly burst if I did not see her.

To my uncle and brothers I said nothing about having seen the Krilofs; still less inclined was I to mention that I had fallen in love. I could not bring myself to speak of such a thing to them; their commercial minds could never, I thought, have grasped the idea of love. They would have said I was mad—which they often affirmed even without this excuse—or they might have said something to irritate me, and this would have been a pity, for I loved my brothers well in spite of their absolute want of sympathy for my turn of mind, and of mine for theirs.

And so, on the following day, I rode with my usual companions through the forest, and again Kamka was the objective point for our journey. This time I did not meet my enemy Andrey, nor his brothers; but I suddenly came upon a far more welcome sight; for, as I rode slowly through a pine-glade a mile or two from the village, there was the Princess Vera herself, mounted upon a beautiful Cossack pony, and riding in the same direction as I, and only fifty yards ahead of me. I spurred old Daniel on, and my charmer, hearing the clattering of his hoofs behind her, looked round.

She blushed when she saw me—that much I was certain of—and then she frowned and turned her horse aside into the forest without a word or a look of greeting. My heart sank when I saw this; for, I thought, a cherished family feud, as a sort of outer line of defence, would render the capture of the citadel, her affections, additionally difficult. Nevertheless, I did not despair, but directed old Daniel into the line my charmer had taken, following close upon her; that is, about ten yards behind, Borka and Borza accompanying me, one on each side, and doubtless wondering at this new kind of chase.

I had no idea whither Vera was directing her course, but I saw with some satisfaction that at all events it was not towards Kamka. Her pony was a beautiful creature and moved superbly, and had I bestridden any horse in our stables other than old Daniel, she would have outstripped me hopelessly that day. But old Daniel held his own easily.

Mile followed upon mile, and still this odd chase went on, and presently I realised that if Vera pursued her present course a little farther we should reach the banks of the Kama, and then, I thought exultant'y, I should have her; for when she turned—as turn she must—she would confront me, and then she could not very well ignore altogether my presence, and must surely speak.

For up to now no word or look had been interchanged between us; the ride had been as silent as the flight of time itself, and, saving that first rapid glance, she had betrayed no consciousness

whatever of my presence.

In a very few minutes the river came in sight. I could see its wide bosom gleaming in the sunshine, glittering here and there between the tree-trunks, and I rejoiced at the sight, for I knew this foolish pursuit would now end, and I should at least have the delight of looking once more in her eyes, even though she were still obstinate and refused to speak to me.

I have since that day thought and laughed many and many a time over that odd love-chase of our boy and girl days, but I certainly found nothing in it to laugh at at the time. On the contrary, though quite in love with this girl, I was waxing very angry with her, for, as a matter of fact, I have never, from my earliest youth, taken kindly to the opposing of other wills to my own—and I never hunted hare or fox with more determination to capture my quarry than did I now pursue this incomprehensible but irresistible little princess.

And now the river bank was all but reached, and I spurred old

Daniel forward, in order to be at her very elbow when she should turn and face me.

But Vera turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. She raised her arm as she approached the bank, and encouraging her pony by word and gesture, plunged with him straight into the stream, to my great and almost boundless astonishment and consternation, for I had not dreamt of the girl committing so foolish an act, the season being spring-time and the river at flood with melted snows, and very rapid and wide, and consequently dan-

Daniel and I were not long in following her lead, however; we had forded and swum many a stream together, he and I, and thought little of such things; though I should have hesitated before attempting the Kama at full flood, but for the necessity of following this foolish girl in her mad enterprise. As we sprang from the bank I saw Vera turn her head for the first time—to see, doubtless, whether I had followed her; and finding that I was still in pursuit, she flashed her eyes at me and laughed aloud, saying something which I lost in the splash of our contact with the water. She headed for the opposite shore; but I was well aware that she could never stem this current, and that the farther she left this shore of ours, the more difficult would it be to return—as return she must or be swept away, hopelessly, by the swirl of mid-stream. Even now the current was taking her pony flankwise and twisting him half round towards me; he was unaccustomed to this work, and was frightened by the rush of the water; and fearing that he would lose his head and sink, I spurred Daniel and directed him slightly down-stream, in order to intercept his less experienced fellow and its precious burden.

In a moment I had overtaken them and laid hold of Vera's bridle. 'Come back,' I said, tugging it round, 'this is foolish

play!'

'Let go,' cried Vera; 'are you frightened? Let go, I say; turn back if you fear to follow me across, but let go!' It was no time for courtesies and explanations; I pulled her horse round and headed him for the shore, she shouting to me to let go, and, I think, even striking me with her riding-whip.

But whether her pony was spent with his long gallop, or whether-which is more likely-he was less excellent as a swimmer than as a land-goer, he now showed signs of exhaustion, and, though we were not very far from shore and by no means in the worst of the current, it was clear that he could not stem the one and reach the other; for all the splashing of his forelegs, desperately struggling, gained him not an inch of water shorewards, and his only progress was sideways—drifting, in fact, helplessly at the mercy of the stream.

I dropped the bridle, and seized Vera with my arm.

'Come,' I said, 'your horse is helpless; he will drown in a moment!'

But Vera, though pale now and evidently concerned for her

horse's safety, shook me off and bade me let her be.

'Nay, you shall come,' I said, and placing my arm fairly round her waist, I lifted her from her own horse and placed her upon Daniel. Once I had done this, she struggled no more, but allowed me to hold her on, and then we found that she had abandoned her steed none too soon, for the next moment the poor animal was caught in a swirl of the current, was twisted round, struggling helplessly, splashed for an instant or two with knees showing above the surface in his frantic efforts to keep afloat, and then suddenly disappeared and was seen no more.

Good old Daniel brought his burden to shore in safety, though I eased him to some extent by slipping off and swimming along-side, holding by the bridle, and so, happily, we arrived in port.

I was prepared for scolding, and perhaps for scorn, but not for kindness; and therefore her first words, which were spoken in a gentle manner and with no appearance of anger, surprised and pleased me greatly. 'You have then,' she said, 'after all, some will of your own!'

'I am sometimes told that I have too much!' I said.

'Indeed?' she said, 'you surprise me.'

I could not imagine what she was driving at, and answered nothing.

'And yet,' she continued, 'you were easily persuaded, yester-day, to part with the game you had killed, at my brother's bidding! Perhaps your valour is not equal to your will-power?'

'No one has ever called me a coward yet,' I faltered.

'And yet you were frightened away from Kamka yesterday,' she retorted. 'Do you know what I hate worse than anything in the world?' she added, knitting her brows and bending a little towards me from Daniel's back—'a coward!'

'Your brother sent a serf with an insulting message to you

about me,' I said, blushing.

'I am acquainted with Andrey's ways,' she said, and there the conversation ended. We only spoke at intervals after this, and by the time we arrived at Kamka, or as close to the village as she

would allow me to come, I had scarcely made any progress towards intimacy with Vera. She smiled, however, when we parted, and said that it was well that I possessed a will of my own, though I had only exercised it over a weak girl. I flushed.

'If your brother is chastised one of these days,' I said hotly,

'he will have you to thank for it!'

'There, there, there!' she cried, laughing merrily, and her eyes flashing deliciously, 'there speaks a man at last! Men are made for fighting, and not for swallowing insults!' And with this she ran off through the trees, waving her hand and smiling as she

disappeared.

And, in truth, she left me an exceedingly bewildered and astonished young man, for she was a harder nut than I had wit enough to crack at that time and for some while after; and all that I could comprehend of the matter now was, that here was a sister who, for some inscrutable reason, desired me, a stranger, or nearly so, to break her own brother's head—unless, indeed, she was anxious that I should get my own broken. And the upshot of the day's work was, that I was more determined than ever to pick a quarrel with Prince Andrey Krilof; and if I could oblige his sister by doing so, why, so much the better.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONG THE BRIGANDS.

It is my desire to avoid anything savouring of boastfulness in this record, and therefore I do not propose to enter into any details as to the occasion upon which the outstanding account between Prince Andrey Krilof and myself was settled. Suffice to say that on the day following the events just described I prepared myself for meeting my enemy, by cutting two bludgeons of green wood, of equal length and thickness, which, with my riding-whip, I carried in my hand as I rode; and that, having met my man, hunting by himself in the forest, I soon caused him to quarrel with me and to agree to a settlement of matters in general by means of my two bludgeons, of which I gave him the choice. We were fairly equally matched in size and strength, though he was two years my senior, and we pounded one another freely; but in the end I tired him out and brought him to earth, but without the breaking of bones or any serious hurt beyond bruises and contusions, of which I certainly had a fair share.

We were better friends after this battle than before it, for Andrey now treated me with respect; and indeed for a while appeared, or perhaps allowed himself to appear, in a far more agreeable light from this day onward. But after our settlement I felt bound to insist upon his assistance in a hare-hunt (during which Borka and Borza showed their great superiority over his hounds—he declaring, however, that he possessed a dozen better than these at home), for I was desirous of making a little offering of three of these animals to the Princess Vera.

Andrey laughed when I bade him take the game and present it in my name to his sister. He flushed, and I cannot tell whether he understood the matter as I understood it or not; if he did, it must have been a disagreeable duty to deliver that message. However, he said that his sister 'would doubtless be pleased to accept the gift,' and it is certain that he performed the commission entrusted

to him, for of this I received confirmation afterwards.

When next I met Vera, I was half afraid lest she should be colder than ever towards me, regarding my message to her as an impertinence, and perhaps indignant also by reason of my victory over her brother; but, to my surprise and joy, the actual fact was exactly the opposite of what I had feared. Vera was frank and friendly, and made no allusion whatever to ancient feuds or to recent quarrels, but rode with me, and hunted with me, and conversed with perfect freedom. Within a short while we had become intimate friends, and towards the end of the summer an adventure in which we were associated cemented our friendship, and revealed, with regard to her feelings for me, that which she must have known long since to be the condition of my own for her, though neither of us had used the language of love up to this time; for I fancy girls, even young ones, are not slow to observe the awakening of the tender passion in the opposite sex when themselves are the object, even though the youth be both too awkward and too shy to state the fact in so many words—as I was!

We were riding through the forest one afternoon, not far from the banks of the Kama river, talking, I think, about my Moscow experiences and the vagaries and eccentric enterprises of the young Grand Duke, our sovereign, the tale of whose horrible vengeance upon Shuisky had lately reached us. Vera was never tired of hearing about this extraordinary young prince and of my association with him, and of the good influence which Adashef and I had endeavoured to exert over him; and especially the story of my ducking of his Majesty and the rest in the stream, which exercised an extraordinary fascination over her. As she always declared, there must be the elements both of greatness and goodness in Ivan, or he could never have forgiven me the terrible insult of having plunged my sovereign in the stream!

Greatness and goodness, indeed! there was much of both in my dear master, as those who knew him best are well aware; greatness more than that of any Russian since the world began; and goodness—what human being is always good? Only by the mercy of the Highest can the best of us keep sin from his gate for a while!

But my old man's pen is running away with me again.

We were wandering, Vera and I, as I said, by the Kama shore, conversing happily and thinking of no impending evil, when there suddenly sprang out from behind tree-trunks and aspen bushes, which abounded there, several wild-looking men, who, I could tell at a glance, were strangers to our part of the country. Two of the fellows graspe I my bridle, and another pair seized Vera's rein, one on each side.

I must confess that I entirely lost my presence of mind for the first moment, the attack was too sudden. Had I been as prompt to resist as were Borka and Borza, I might have dashed my men aside, ridden down Vera's assailants, and galloped safely away with her. But I was surprised, and allowed the fellows to seize and hold my bridle, and so the opportunity was lost. The two dogs instantly pinned each a man, but I called them off, fearing for their safety, and bade them depart home, which they immediately did, looking ashamed, and imagining, doubtless, that they had offended. As for me, I slipped suddenly back over the tail of Daniel, and made for those who held Vera's bridle; but I was quickly seized and captured, though I fought and struggled violently.

Meanwhile, beyond a few inarticulate cries or shouts from the attacking party, there had been nothing said; indeed, all that I have so far described passed in less time than is occupied in writing a single line of this history. But now a voice made itself heard—a strong authoritative voice, rough but not unkindly in tone.

'By the prophet!' it cried, 'that is a young spitfire of the first order—secure him, you, Abdul—but don't hurt him. Secure the girl—some of you.'

The man addressed as Abdul bound me round the arms with a red cloth band—a long thing which he unwound from about his waist—I struggling ineffectually; while two others went to lift

Vera from her saddle. But my splendid Vera here asserted herself. She clubbed her whip as she had done to beat off the wolves at our first meeting, and struck out at the first who offered to touch her.

'Hands off!' she cried, so haughtily that her assailants drew back for a moment and looked to their chief, as though uncertain as to how they should act; 'hands off! I allow no one to touch me!'

The chief laughed aloud, and bade the men remove the girl.

Again the fellows advanced, and once more they recoiled, as Vera, with flashing eyes, struck them over face and hands with her whip, calling them dogs, cowards, and other contemptuous names.

I joined in with her in this abuse, and cried:

'Let her alone, you cowards; or release me, and I will fight you one by one, or two by two, beginning with that guffawing ruffian there!' with which I nodded towards the chief.

'Brave, brave, brave!' the latter laughed. 'I like him—I like them both—let her alone, Hassan, only hold the bridle—and now march, all of you. Don't hurt that boy; if I mistake not, he

is worth a good ransom!'

So we all moved away, Vera unmolested and still mounted, thanks to her own courage and the kindness of our chief captor; I bound, but not very tightly, and afoot; old Daniel, bucketting, led by two of the robbers; Borka and Borza, fortunately, out of sight and safe, for which they might thank my training and their own obedience.

I had leisure to observe the chief of the band as we marched towards the river, and I may here say that I was in no kind of doubt as to who both he and they might be. I had heard of the late arrival in these parts of a strong Cossack marauding band, which made its home on the water, going from place to place in oar-barges or galleys, and living by plunder and ransom upon the inhabitants of the provinces through which they passed. Their chieftain was one Yermak, a young man of about twenty-five years of age, a Cossack and a hetman or ataman, though a nomad and a buccaneer of hopelessly vagabond tastes and with no settled home of his own. This man was said to possess immense influence over his followers, and to have met with extraordinary success in his nefarious profession throughout the Don and Volga provinces, which he had, presumably, exhausted for the time being, since he had now honoured our own Kama district with his attentions.

He was a striking-looking person, of middle height, but with shoulders and chest of extraordinary breadth. His eyes were black and of a strangely penetrating type, flashing when he spoke like two gems in the sun-rays. His nose was less flat than is usual in Tartars, to which race, it was said, he belonged; and his mouth opened widely when he smiled, as he often did, and revealed a double line of splendid white teeth. He wore sword and large pistols in the belt of his kaftan, as well as more than one long knife with worked silver handles. His handsome face was crowned with a conical cap, of which the lower half was Astrachan lamb's-wool and the top a rich velvet of deep red colour.

I was gazing into this man's face as we walked along, wondering whether this was indeed that Yermak of whom I had heard much of late, and with whose wild life I was conscious of feeling much sympathy—though my imagination revolted against his unscrupulous warfare against the property of others—when he turned his curious eyes upon me and returned my gaze for an

instant or two without speaking.

'Yes, I am Yermak,' he said presently, and apparently in

answer to my thoughts, for I had said nothing.

I flushed with surprise that he should have read my secret soul in this way, and perhaps with some annoyance also, for I prefer to keep my thoughts to myself.

'Are you a wizard, then, as well as a robber and a murderer?'

I said.

'I am no murderer,' he replied; 'we take no lives, if we can help it. Why should we, since wealth is our object, and ransoms are more profitable than bloodshed? As for being a wizard, I am enough of that to guess that you two young people are of the

Stroganofs.'

'Then you are only half a wizard,' I said, 'for the boyarishnya is of the Krilofs, though you are right as to me.' I do not know why I gave him this information, unless it was in the fond hope of terrifying him by revealing into what hornets'-nests he had placed his hands in meddling with us two; for of course the Stroganofs and the Krilofs represented all the power and wealth of the district for a hundred miles around. Yermak flushed as I made the communication; but it was clearly not terror that moved him, but rather surprise and exultation.

'Ah!' he said, 'good again! A bird from each covey; this

is better than I expected!'

'Is it?' I said haughtily; 'the Stroganofs and Krilofs are ill folks to meddle with in these parts, as even a Yermak may find!' Yermak laughed.

'Poor Yermak!' he cried, 'thou must take heed to thyself! Are they all spitfires like you?' he added, 'and like the little

lady yonder?'

'That you shall find out for yourself,' I said haughtily, relapsing into silence. As a matter of fact, I was rather doubtful as to how my good uncle and brothers would proceed in the event of their desiring to release me by force of arms, or to chastise my captors after I should have been ransomed. For my relatives were men of peace, and our serfs and dependents were peaceful also, by circumstance and habit; for the Cossacks had never before molested us, and our commercial and agricultural community were unused to the ways of war and violence. Nevertheless, it was necessary to preserve a bold and defiant attitude. Perhaps the Krilofs were more martial in their ideas than my Stroganof relations. As a matter of fact, I now know that Vera represented by far the most martial spirit amongst them all.

Arrived at the Kama's bank, Vera and I were placed in a small boat, one of several, and conveyed towards an island in midstream. Skirting this island and reaching the other side of it, we came in sight of two large galleys, hidden entirely from that bank of the stream from which we had come, and into one of these we were directed to climb. There was a kind of pavilion over the stern of the vessel, and into this we were escorted by Yermak himself. A little child, a girl of about five years of age, was running about at play, shricking with childish delight over some game in which her mother—a handsome Tartar woman, gorgeously dressed—joined. The little one stopped short as she caught sight of us, and stood silent and open-mouthed to gaze at us, and Yermak caught her up in his arms to fondle and caress her.

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT SWIM.

Our stay on board of Yermak's galley was somewhat prolonged. but it would be untrue to say that I greatly disliked my captivity. In the first place, I was constantly with Vera, who, for her part, was not unhappy either. Yermak was kind and friendly to us, and we were free to walk about and do what we liked within the limited area of the galley's deck and pavilion. We had removed from our position behind the island to a wide, open reach of water, and were now at anchor in the very middle of the stream, with nearly half a mile of tumultuously flowing Kama between us and either shore. In releasing me of my bonds, Yermak had alluded to this fact, and had said that though he doubted not I was the kind of lad who would swim as well as most, I had, nevertheless, better not attempt to escape by water, since his men were continually on the watch on deck; and besides this, the current was dangerous and the stream wide, and it would be madness to attempt it. Nothing should happen to us if we behaved ourselves with docility, he said. To which I replied that, though I could swim a little, yet I had no mind to be drowned or shot, which answer seemed to satisfy him better than it should have pleased him; but, fortunately, he could not always read the thoughts of my brain. Had he done so, he would have seen that in my inner being I was full of exquisite mirth to think that any one could suppose half a mile of Kama water would suffice to separate me from the desire of my heart. The Kama and I were old friends, and understood each other thoroughly. been alone I could have escaped at any moment; that is, if there had been no one to consider but myself; but, of course, there was Vera. I suppose Yermak delayed a few days before applying to our friends for the price of our freedom, in order that our relatives might become during that period increasingly anxious on account of our disappearance, and the more willing to pay when they should hear of our safety. At any rate, he made no move for nearly a week, and my captivity began to grow irksome to me, pleasant as it was to be near Vera. Yermak was the most devoted of fathers, and took an extraordinary delight in his little daughter, with whom this rough brigand would play, like another child, for an hour at a time. To us he was invariably kind, and loved to rally us, or me, perhaps I should say, especially, upon my evident attachment to my beautiful princess; he had a mind, he would sometimes say, to get me ransomed first, because he could then assure himself of a great price for Vera's freedom, seeing that I would add my wealth to that of her own folk, in order to recover her. This threat of Yermak's, though intended, I believe, in jest, greatly incensed and alarmed me, and I determined that under no circumstances would I consent to obtain my freedom if I must leave Vera in captivity. Better to attempt escape together than submit to separation, even though escape appeared a difficult, if not an impossible matter.

Our opportunity came at the end of a week. One evening Yermak left the galley, taking an escort of a few armed men, in order, as he said, to journey to Perm, that he might settle with my relatives for my release. The men left on deck as sentinels took advantage of the captain's absence to drink heavily. It was a dark night; everything was propitious for an attempt, and I whispered my plan to Vera as we leant together over the side of the barge and watched the dark water flow by beneath us.

'Can you swim, Vera?' I said.

'Of course,' said Vera, scornfully; 'what a question for a

Kama-bred girl!'

'I thought so,' I replied; 'but you may need to be a good swimmer indeed to-night, for listen——' and I sketched out to her my plan of escape as I had evolved it. I should watch my opportunity when these drinking and brawling fellows were not looking out, and drop quietly into the stream, swimming straight to the shore. There I should secure the small boat left by some of Yermak's men in the reeds, and row softly back. When I signalled to her by gently whistling she must drop into the water and swim a few yards down-stream, when I would pick her up.

It was a foolhardy enterprise at the best, especially when one considers that these brigands intended us no injury, and that our liberty could only be a matter of a few days at most. But I was always of that kind of disposition, that if there were two ways of attaining the same object, one safe and humdrum and the other dangerous and adventurous, I would certainly choose the alternative which presented the, to me, fascinating advantage of personal risk.

Vera, I found, was entirely of my way of thinking. When I revealed my plan to her, she seized my arm in her hands and pressed it.

'Sasha,' she whispered, this being the familiar form of my name, Alexander, 'it is splendid; I should die for shame to be bought out of this adventure; let us escape before Yermak returns to cart us back to our homes like strayed sheep!'

Here was spirit indeed! A girl after my own heart!

'But aren't you afraid of this wide stream,' I said, 'and the tremendous current that runs just here?'

I knew very well she was no more afraid of it than I, but I loved to see her eyes flash and to hear the delicious scorn in her

voice as she repudiated the idea of such a thing.

So all was settled between us, and half an hour later, the moon having obligingly retired behind a cloud, and the sentinels being extremely busy over their rye-brandy and their cards, I prepared myself for departure, slipping off my long boots, awkward for swimming in, and divesting myself also of my skirted kaftan.

'Farewell for the present, Vera,' I said, taking her hand in the darkness and pressing it. Then Vera surprised me. She

clung to me tightly.

'Are you sure of yourself, Sasha?' she whispered, 'are you sure of yourself? It is very dark and a long swim to shore. Let me swim with you—we can encourage each other! I could feel her trembling; it was the first time I had known her betray any kind of nervousness, and, as I say, it surprised me, for I did not then realise that, in this unfamiliar display of heart-sinking, Vera had revealed to me a great and most beautiful secret.

'I am very sure indeed, Vera,' I said, 'and you may be just as sure of me as I am of myself; I have swum right across the

Kama many and many a time.'

'Go, then,' she said, 'go at once, and God be with you!'

In another moment I had lowered myself over the side and

dropped quietly into the stream.

I did not attempt to cross in a straight line, but allowed the current to carry me considerably downwards. The night was hot, and the touch of the cool water was delicious, and my spirits were high and buoyant as I struck out and sped gaily over the bosom of the friendly Kama. It was a long swim, and swimming seems twice as far when it is dark and the object towards which one is moving is invisible. Once or twice I could not help wondering whether I had not, somehow, swum round in a half-circle, or missed my way in some other manner, so long did the distance appear to me; but eventually my hands struck against reeds, and I knew that I had at length reached the shore or nearly so.

It was a matter of some difficulty to find the boat in the darkness, and I was almost despairing of ever succeeding in my search, when suddenly the moon came out, and by its light I soon saw the little craft nestling among the reeds. The same spell of moonlight showed me the galley floating like a black swan on the dancing silver-tipped wavelets, and I thought of Vera standing there, and waiting anxiously by the bulwark; and I hastened to get the boat off and row away to pick her up without further delay.

The moon retired once more into the seclusion of a scudding cloud, and I was obliged to steer by sound only, for I could no longer see the galley. The Cossacks on board, however, were still busy over their wine and their brawling, and there was plenty of

noise to guide myself by.

Softly and cautiously I plied my oars until I judged that I was about thirty or forty yards from the galley, and below it by the current of the river. Then I stopped and listened for a moment, and was in the act of posing my lips to whistle out my prearranged signal to Vera, when unluckily the moon once again shouldered herself free of her cloud tormentors, and shone out fully and broadly over the water, in such a manner that my boat and I lay in the full pathway of her bright beams.

At the same instant some one cried 'Karaool! who goes there?' I gave no reply, but hid myself as much as possible by bending my head and subsiding into the bottom of the boat.

One of the drunken sentries then fired a shot, which went I

know not whither; it did not strike me or the boat.

Nevertheless, I thought, if it was to be a matter of shooting and perhaps pursuing, I would rather be out of the boat than in it, and I lost no time in slipping once more into the water. They would never see my head in the moonlight, I knew,

especially if I dived occasionally beneath the surface.

There was a boat continually floating by the side of the galley, with a man always in it, and into this boat I saw several men now scramble and start in pursuit of my own craft. This was propitious for my purpose, which was to return at once and unperceived to the galley; and in another moment or two I had safely covered the distance that lay between me and the large vessel, and was scrambling up the side.

I found the deck nearly deserted—a few men standing in a group in the bows looking eagerly after the boat which had started in pursuit of me. Most of the crew had staggered away

to sleep, and the rest were with Yermak ashore, or else joining in the pursuit of my unworthy self. But I soon discovered Vera leaning over the side, and straining her eyes in the direction in which lay the two boats, though there was nothing now to be seen, for the moon had disappeared and left a dark world behind her. To my surprise, my princess was in tears. I touched her arm, and Vera started round.

She gazed at me for an instant as though I were a ghost. Then she suddenly seized me in her arms with a cry of joy, clasping her hands tightly about my neck and kissing me repeatedly, wet and dripping as I was. I was amazed at this demonstration, which was unlike Vera, and unexpected; but the amazement was a pleasurable sentiment.

'I thought they had shot you, and that I should never see you again,' she said. 'Oh, Sasha, what should I have done then?'

I had not sense enough to say anything, but I had enough to repay Vera's caresses with interest.

'And you came back, though you might have escaped,' she added; 'it would have been easy for you to swim ashore instead of returning for me; but perhaps you are weary?'

'Not an atom,' I said, truthfully enough.

'Then let us swim together—oh, do let us!' she entreated.

I shook my head. 'It is too dangerous, Vera,' I said, 'now that they are on the alert; and the moon is in a fickle mood; and the swim is a long one, longer than I thought.' Vera stamped her foot angrily.

'Say at once that you are afraid,' she said.

'Very well, then, I am afraid,' I said.

'Then you are a coward, and I hate cowards,' she hissed, 'and—and I wish I had not kissed you just now; I meant nothing by it!'

I had no reply ready and remained silent.

'And now, since you refuse to accompany me, I am going to swim alone,' continued Vera.

'You shall not,' I said.

'And why not?' she said haughtily.

'Because I forbid you and shall not allow it,' I said. I knew very well that a display of masterfulness would satisfy Vera better than anything else in her then mood, and it did. She said nothing, but leaned and stared at the water silently, I standing as silently at her side. Presently she took my hand and kissed it, and retired into the pavilion.

And I, foolish lad that I was, felt a glow of gratified vanity and happiness because I knew that I had made a conquest of this queenly maiden of fifteen summers, and that henceforward she

was my own, body, soul, and spirit.

The next day Yermak returned, not in the best of humours. He had interviewed my uncle, and brought back a low opinion of my commercial-minded relative. I fancy the latter had threatened and lectured the Cossack brigand, making it clear to him that he thought ill of his nefarious calling; and it is certain that he would not listen to Yermak's outrageous demands for my ransom. According to Yermak's version of my uncle's remarks, he is supposed to have said that if Yermak took me and kept me altogether, it would be no great loss to the family, whereas I might be an acquisition to the brigand troop; but that, since I was the son of his elder brother, he supposed he must make some kind of offer for my liberty, and the offer—according to Yermak—was a very inadequate one indeed.

I have said that Yermak returned in bad humour, and on this first evening after his journey to Perm he took occasion to show that, though by nature a kind-hearted and agreeable man, he was capable of displaying at times great anger and ferocity, if irritated by those in his service. When he heard of the drunkenness and brawling of his men in his absence, of which I conclude he learned from his wife, he flew forthwith into a fit of passion, and severely punished several of the offenders, and especially one named Hassan, whom he flogged savagely with the knoot, wielding that barbarous instrument with his own hand, and causing poor Hassan to retire blubbering and bleeding to the hold, where the men slept as best they could among the casks and lumber with which it was filled. It was not a pleasant sight to see the knoot laid on by Yermak's strong arm, and seeing the evil mood which possessed the chieftain on this day of his return, I was glad indeed that he had not been informed of my attempted escape. of which, as a matter of fact, no one knew except Vera; unless, indeed, it was Yermak's beautiful and gentle wife, who certainly observed my dripping garments and must have formed some opinion as to the cause of my evident dampness; but who, if she guessed it, did not betray me.

CHAPTER VIII.

FREEDOM.

And now happened a very small matter, from which proceeded great results. It is wonderful from how tiny a spark, sometimes, the most all-consuming conflagration will originate—smouldering, perhaps, hidden and unnoticed for a long while ere it bursts out in all its splendour and might.

On the morning after Yermak's return I was on deck early while the chief still slept, for I could not rest by reason of the excitement of the previous evening. The sun was up and the morning lovely, and the Kama looked most inviting for a swim—her wavelets dancing and bobbing bewitchingly in the sun's rays. Little Aleena, Yermak's tiny daughter, commonly called Aleenooshka, was playing about outside the pavilion within which her parents still reposed. I played with the child for a while until I tired of it, after which I lay down to rest and dream until Vera should appear to relieve my dulness; for it had come to this, that until Vera appeared, day did not begin, for me!

The child Aleenooshka continued to play about the deserted deck, and I, perhaps, fell asleep behind the chest against which I lay. Suddenly I was aroused by a scream from Aleenooshka, and then I saw a sight which froze my blood for a moment and prevented me from moving a finger.

I saw Hassan scrambling out of the hold, looking like a devil, with his eyes fixed upon the little one, who recoiled in terror from him. In one moment he had seized her, and placing one hand upon her mouth to stifle any sound she might make, he swung her high in the air and launched her out into mid-stream, where she struck the water with a splash and disappeared.

If Aleenooshka had been the most worthless of puppies, I should have made this incident an excuse for a plunge into my beloved Kama and a pleasant morning swim; it was no displeasing or dangerous task for me to swim after her, and consequently no credit to me; therefore it is not for the pleasure of sounding my own praises that I record my action. All that I did was to plunge head first from the galley, strike out for the spot where one little arm had reappeared, as though in piteous entreaty for aid, seize the child, and carry her back spluttering and screaming to the barge—and yet this little action

on my part was, under Providence, the primary cause of the acquisition to Russia of the whole of Siberia.

How this great result proceeded from so slight a cause it will be my task to show in the course of these records.

But the first link in the chain which connects the great event with the small lay in the deep gratitude which Yermak undoubtedly felt for the service I had rendered him in saving his little one from death. He embraced me and wept over his child and over me—she was none the worse for her ducking, though Hassan's cruel hands left bruise-marks upon her delicate throat and limbs for some time after—and finally he solemnly vowed by all the Christian Saints as well as by Mahomet that there was nothing in this world that he would not give or do for me, either now or at any future time, presenting me with a ring from his finger in token of his promises, and both Vera and me with our freedom as an earnest of the sincerity of the same.

As for Hassan, he had taken the opportunity of the agitation prevailing during those moments when Aleenooshka was restored to her mother's arms, and Yermak with all his men had crowded around her and around me, to drop quietly into the water and swim away to the shore. By the time that Yermak had had leisure to learn of his villainy, he was observed wading out of the reeds half a mile away, and in another moment had disappeared in the forest; and though Yermak, in his fury and vengeful passion, sent armed men to overtake and cut him in pieces, the

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party returned without having caught the miscreant.

And so Vera and I found ourselves at liberty to depart after a term of captivity lasting for a little over a week; and depart we did after many cordial expressions of gratitude from Yermak, who escorted us part of the way homewards. When he took his leave of us he repeated his promise to stand my friend in small things or great, whenever called upon by me to do so; and though at the time I thought little of his promise-for how, I reflected, was this brigand chief to be of any service to a Stroganof, excepting in so far as to exempt his lands and possessions from pillage? yet now, in my age, I am ready and happy to acknowledge that this great man has found opportunity to redeem his pledge in a manner undreamed of-grandly, imperially, magnificently; having rendered such services, through me and mine, to my beloved master as must for ever dwarf the achievements of future pioneers of Russian greatness; unless, indeed, in future ages there rise up a second Yermak as well as a second Siberia to be conqueredthe former of which contingencies is perhaps as improbable as the latter.

My interview with my uncle was amusing, because he was still under the impression that a huge sum of money was payable for my release, and his relief of mind to hear that this obligation had been remitted was quite comical. My brothers were glad to see me safely restored to freedom and the comforts of home, though it had not occurred either to them or to my uncle to attempt my release by force of arms. Serfs had, indeed, been sent to scour the woods and river banks for me, and some of these had brought in news of the dreaded presence of Yermak's pirate-galleys; but with this discovery the search for me had ended, since war and violence were strangers to the very imagination of my commercial relatives, and they would have as soon thought of organising a campaign against the moon as of risking their skins in an attack upon Yermak. Still, they were honestly glad to see me, and glad, too, to hear that I had had the good fortune to gain the friendship of the great Cossack brigand; for our home and our possessions were now safe from molestation. at all events: 'and who knows,' added my uncle, 'if the Grand Duke keeps his promise, now that Shuisky is dead, and empowers me to develop the Stroganof estate on the other side of the Urals, this Yermak may be made of some use yet, Sasha! I may yet employ both you and him in an enterprise that would, I think, be more agreeable to you than staying at home.'

I only laughed at my uncle's prophetic utterance, thinking no more of it than this: that my good relative little guessed how strong a reason I had at present for preferring to stay at home and within touch of Molebsk; for the prophecy stirred no answering wave of prevision in my heart; and, if the truth be known, I do not think that at this time I either expected or desired ever to see my friend Yermak again, or to call upon him to fulfil what I regarded as an empty and valueless promise, made in the heat and

flush of gratitude.

One little circumstance surprised me on my return home from captivity. I had looked upon old Daniel, my splendid Cossack pony, as lost. He had been led away when we were both captured, and taken I knew not whither, but probably herded with the rest of Yermak's ill-gotten flocks and droves. Yet one of the first objects my eyes rested upon on visiting the yard at home after my return, was old Daniel himself, large as life, and as pleased to see me as I was to see him. He came bucketting up to me,

and laid his nose in my hand, very happy to behold his lost master; but, unfortunately, speech was just the one and only accomplishment Daniel could never quite acquire, and therefore I do not know the exact process by which Daniel rid himself of his captors and returned home; these things are wrapped for ever in the darkness of the impenetrable. But Daniel probably waited, I should say, until some stranger tried to ride him, and then removed that stranger in one of several ways Daniel knew of—hung him up on the bough of a tree, perhaps, or shot him suddenly into the Kama—and went home.

Yermak and his galleys disappeared shortly afterwards; having nothing to gain in our part of the world, where we and the Krilofs were the only families seriously worth plundering, it was useless for them to stay here; and I saw no more of Yermak for two or three years, though I continued to wear the ring he gave me, which was a valuable trinket, besides serving to remind me of an entertaining adventure. During those two or three years my intimacy with my princess ripened and developed. We quarrelled occasionally, but our devotion to each other was very great, nevertheless, and we never fell out for long. My quarrels with her brothers were still more frequent, and with them I came many times to blows. There was spirit in these Krilofs, and it was a pleasure to fight with them, because I knew that even if worsted, they would still be ready to try conclusions the next time we happened to meet. They were against my intimacy with Vera, but not, as they themselves informed me, on personal grounds. My fault lay in being a Stroganof, and though I did my best on every possible occasion to prove to them that the Stroganofs were better men than the Krilofs (though sometimes I was worsted) I could never convince them of the fact.

Needless to say, their opposition had not the slightest effect upon either Vera or myself. I am not modest enough to pretend that my own attractions were not the principal rock upon which was built the edifice of Vera's love for me; but I firmly believe that even if this had not been the case, and if I had nevertheless courted her in despite of her brothers, their opposition would have sufficed to throw her into my arms; for Vera possessed all the combative spirit of her brothers, tenfold more intensified than theirs—a very splendid spirit was that of my princess, and her courage surpassed the courage of women, though her womanly tenderness, at opportunity, yielded not an atom to the gentlest of them.

And so, in opposition, and in spite of opposition, our affection grew and developed during those two years, while I, and she also, passed from our fifteenth to our seventeenth summers; and in that time my body found occasion to enlarge itself in such a manner that at the end of the thirty months I was, to all appearances, a full-grown man, and large at that—not so very tall, but broad and very strong in the limb and muscle; and as for Vera, assuredly never maiden breathed more beautiful or more haughty than my princess, nor yet more bewitching. And then, at the end of that period, there came to us at Perm whispers from Moscow of strange doings at Court-indications that the young eagle Ivan was fluttering his wings and growing restless; hints that he was showing character, and had startled continually his advisers, with new and immense schemes and projects of aggrandisement and ambition. We were to have, rumour said, a great king over us, who should rule us with a rod of iron, and live to be the terror of the enemies of Russia, and of Europe generally.

He had already laid claim to and adopted the title of Cæsar or Tsar, to which he declared himself entitled (as descended, on the mother's side, from the Emperors of the Byzantine line), and was now no longer to be known as Grand Duke of Moscow, but as Tsar of Russia—a determination which pleased all classes of the

community, priests, boyars, and people.

Then followed more news—news which did not at first greatly interest us, not specially so, I mean, though afterwards it proved of the greatest moment to us and pregnant with immense consequences. The young Tsar, who was about my age, scarcely seventeen, expressed his intention of being married. He thought, the proclamation ran, of taking a wife from one of the European Courts, and would look about him for a suitable consort. presently news came of a second proclamation, to the effect that Ivan had reconsidered the matter of his marriage, and that, rather than risk uniting himself with a princess who spoke in a different tongue, and worshipped God in a different manner, from his own-for quarrels and bickerings were certain to result from such a marriage, and possible trouble to the realm-he had determined to seek a wife from among the daughters of his own boyars, who, he doubted not, were to the full as beautiful and as charming as the fairest of foreign princesses. And then Vera and I laughingly wondered who would be the fortunate boyarishnya among the acquaintances of the young Tsar.

'Probably he is in love already,' said Vera, 'and that is why

the foreign princesses are to be disappointed after all!'

'One would think he had seen you, that he issued the second proclamation,' I said laughingly. 'It's a good thing he has not, Vera!'

'No such luck for me!' said Vera saucily, and laughed too.

But on the next day I received a message from Vera to ride over and see her at once, upon a most important matter, and from the receipt of that message my life-troubles began.

CHAPTER IX.

AN IMPERIAL PROCLAMATION.

I RODE straight to Molebsk, the winter residence of the Krilofs, for it was now the cold season; and though the distance is at least eighty miles, old Daniel accomplished the journey easily in a day. I demanded admittance boldly at the front entrance to the Krilof mansion; for it had come to this, that the young Krilofs had given up as a hopeless task the attempt to keep me away, for I persisted in coming when I pleased in spite of their opposition.

Vera received me joyfully, but I could see that something had occurred to agitate her, and I bade her tell me immediately what had happened. I imagined she would tell me of some more than usually violent quarrel with her brothers about myself, and was prepared, at a word from her, to go in search of those young men and bring them to reason, one by one, with my riding-whip; for by this time I had far outgrown them all in strength, and could do as I liked with the pugnacious but insignificant weaklings.

But Vera had a different kind of communication to make.

'It is this marriage of the young Tsar's!' she said.

I burst out laughing.

'But surely, Vera, you have not sent for me to talk over the Tsar's affairs!' I cried. 'If so, this is a compliment indeed, my soul; since you must have longed much to see me to have sent for me upon so flimsy a pretext!'

'I am always longing to see you,' said Vera simply; 'what else have I in life? But it seems I shall not see you, my Sasha,

for many months after this day.'

Then my laughter died out, and I was serious enough as I asked the girl what she meant.

'Read this!' she said, and handed me a document. This was a copy of a proclamation, the third within a few months or weeks from his Highness the Tsar, and set forth that in view of his approaching marriage, Ivan now called upon his faithful boyars in every quarter of his dominions to send their marriageable daughters to the nearest centre, in order that his Majesty's committee of selection might choose out those worthy of being sent to Moscow for the personal inspection and final selection of the Imperial Bridegroom himself.

A list was appended, containing the names of all those boyars who lived in our district, with the information that the centre to which their daughters should be sent by a given date was Viatka, a large town on the river of the same name, which is a confluent of our own Kama.

Then followed a recital of the pains and penalties which would result if any boyar should presume to run counter to the expressed will of the Tsar by withholding, for any cause, his daughter from the preliminary inspection and census to take place in the various central towns specified.

When I had spelled out this document, I was inclined, at the first impression, to pass the matter off with a laugh; but on consideration it appeared to me that, willing as I might be to risk the displeasure of the sovereign on my own account (for I was personally acquainted with Ivan, as has been shown, and flattered myself that much would be tolerated and forgiven in me which might seriously exasperate in others), yet it would not be well to subject Vera to the Tsar's passion. I suppose my thoughts reflected themselves in my face, for Vera said, when I had finished reading: 'I see you consider this very serious, and so do I. Of course I shall have to go to Viatka.'

'I must think it over,' I said hoarsely; 'Viatka would be bad enough; but of course the committee will send you on to Moscow—.'

'It may not come to that!' said Vera.

'Of course they will,' I replied; 'look in your glass.' Vera blushed and said nothing.

'And supposing you went to Moscow, and the Tsar chose you—what then?' I continued.

'Oh, I had not even contemplated that!' said Vera. 'I was

only thinking of the long journeys and delays—and—and—our separation.'

'That would be bad, but the other would be worse,' I said.

'Why so?' she asked, as though surprised.

'Because if Ivan chose you from among them all—of which there would be great danger—our separation would be for ever.'

'Again, why so?' she said, frowning and looking her haughtiest.

'The Tsar's word is the law,' I explained. 'No maiden could

or would refuse to obey him in such a matter.'

'Then let me tell you,' said Vera, flashing her eyes, and looking like a queen (I could not help thinking what a splendid Tsaritsa she would make, if Ivan were indeed to choose her for his consort!), 'let me tell you that I shall marry whom I please, if I marry at all, though twenty thousand Grand Dukes and boy-Tsars bid me wed them.'

I took Vera's hand and endeavoured to soothe her, but she shook me off. Then an idea struck me.

'Vera,' I said, 'there is a way out of the difficulty, if we could only find it.'

'What is it?' she asked.

'We could be married at once, before the day you are due at Viatka.'

'Yes,' said Vera simply; 'there is that way; I thought of it.'
My heart bounded with joy; good was about to come out of
this threatened evil! But Vera somewhat damped my ecstasy.

'But neither your folk nor mine would hear of it,' she said; 'for besides all the reasons against it which have been advanced so often before, there is now this, that both families would cer-

tainly get into deep trouble.'

This was obviously true. The young Tsar's method of dealing with refractory boyars was notoriously drastic, and it would be dangerous in the last degree to incense him against the two families of Krilof and Stroganof by carrying off, in the very teeth of his *ookaz*, one of the fairest flowers of that garden in which he had signified his intention of culling a nosegay!

So that here was something in the nature of a deadlock; and when the time came for me to mount Daniel and ride away we had discerned no consoling solution of the problem. Nevertheless, I had agreed to put the matter before my uncle, while Vera had promised to do her best to persuade her brothers to allow of our immediate union. I parted from her with a heavy heart, for

I had little hope of winning my uncle over to my side in this matter; he had, I knew, too much at stake in retaining the Tsar's favour; and as for Vera's brothers, were they likely to forego the chance of becoming brothers-in-law to the Head of the Realm for the pleasure of seeing Vera united to a member of a family at feud, for ages, with their own? From every point of view the case looked hopeless.

But though I had expected opposition from my uncle and brothers, I did not suppose the former would have displayed so much excitement as he did when I, somewhat tremblingly, approached him on the subject of my greatly desired marriage with Vera. We had by this time received a similar copy of the proclamation, and I found my uncle deploring the fact that the only Stroganof maiden eligible as one of those who might be chosen was his own daughter, a very excellent and domesticated creature, possessing every amiable quality, but no claim whatever to comeliness, whose chance of being chosen as Tsaritsa was consequently of the smallest.

'Ah, Sasha, my boy,' he concluded, 'our chance is a poor one; and yet only think what might have been if all the Stroganofs were as handsome as thou!' It was a favourite delusion of my uncle's that I was extremely handsome; I was not handsomer than my neighbours, in reality, though Vera says to this day—but I was recording the conversation with my guardian: 'What of this Krilof girl, now, whom I believe you have seen? She is said to be remarkable for personal comeliness; is that so?'

'She is the most beautiful and queenly being that God's sun ever shone on!' said I fervently.

'So?' said my uncle, smiling at my enthusiasm; 'then if the Tsar thinks as you do, we may expect to see a Krilof seated beside him as our sovereign; that would not be a pleasant upshot of the matter for us Stroganofs!'

'No, certainly not,' I assented with fervour; 'but there is little danger of that, for Princess Vera will never consent to marry the Tsar, whatever happens.' My uncle laughed aloud.

'What, refuse to be a Tsaritsa?' he said. 'No, Sasha, such things do not happen. What do you refer to—some love affair?'

'Yes,' I said stoutly, 'she has told me herself that she is in love.'

'Don't believe it, my son; don't believe it!' replied my uncle, with conviction. 'She may be in love, as you say; but let her

taste the pride of being the one chosen maiden from among the rest of her sex; let her see the pomp and grandeur of the Court, and away will vanish all her calf-love for her little local boyar, whoever he may be.'

'All this might happen with others,' said I, 'but Vera is different from other women; as different as the sunshine is from

the pine-torch.'

My uncle laughed again. 'You seem to know this maiden's mind very accurately,' he said; 'one would suppose you were the fortunate boyar whose attractions are to outweigh those of a throne!'

'I am he, uncle,' I said, blushing scarlet; 'Vera loves me. I will marry her immediately, if you permit it; she is willing, and that will settle the question of a Krilof Tsaritsa, which, as you say, would be an unpleasant outcome for us!' I jumped at this frail argument; it was the only one I knew of likely to serve me.

'And settle the fate of the Stroganof family, too, you young fool!' said my uncle, paling with anger or consternation—'and especially of the offending Stroganof! Do you suppose that your action would escape observation, or that the Tsar would spare the boyar families that dared thus openly defy him?'

'But the Tsar is not our owner, and we his slaves!' I said.
'We owe him our allegiance and pay him our tribute, but is he to tell us also whom we may marry and whom not? I say that

we are boyars, and nearly as good as he!'

'At all events the first choice of wives is his!' said my uncle; 'and, at all events, I forbid you to contemplate even for a moment the commission of this mad thing you speak of. Do you not understand that the fortunes of our house hang, at this moment, on the Tsar's favour? Would you wreck our hopes at a blow, and destroy both present prosperity and future aggrandisement by a piece of insanity which you would regret for ever after? If I thought there was danger of it, I would have you locked up until the choice of the Tsar is made!' I had never seen my uncle so moved before.

'At least you will allow me to escort Vera to Viatka, and afterwards to Moscow,' I said, 'if I promise, whatever happens, to do nothing rash?'

'No, that I will not!' he said; 'you shall not go from here if word of mine can prevent it!'

But I would give no promise on this score, to the great dis-

pleasure of my uncle, from whom I parted on terms which were not of the most cordial.

So then I journeyed once more to Molebsk to see Vera, and tell her the result of my talk with my guardian. She had had no better success with her brothers—she had not expected it, nor had I. The Krilofs were naturally anxious that Vera should take her chance with other maidens, and flattered themselves with great hopes as to her prospects and of their own consequent greatness in the near future. Before I parted with my princess that day, I solemnly promised, to her exceeding satisfaction and content, that whether on the journey to Viatka, or thence to Moscow, or whether in the capital itself, wherever she should be, I would never be far away from her, but always at hand—it might be under disguise, or possibly in my own likeness—to consult or to act as occasion demanded.

And, armed with what consolation we could glean from this arrangement, and fortified by renewed vows of unchangeable devotion to each other, we prepared to face the future and to fight out our destiny according as circumstances should array their forces against us.

My uncle kept a careful watch upon my movements. I learned afterwards that he had warned every priest within a radius of fifty miles of my intention to marry against my guardian's will; exhorting them one and all to refuse to perform the rite if applied to.

But chiefly at home at Perm was I watched and worried. Every serf and servant about the place appeared to have his orders to keep me in view and report any suspicious action on my part. It was exceedingly unpleasant. At last I received that which I was awaiting: a notification from Vera that on the following Monday she was to start for Viatka, under the care of her brother Andrey, and of an old family nurse—Tatyána. I received this communication secretly, by means previously discussed and agreed upon between us, so that no one about the house either observed or reported the receipt of Vera's message or my subsequent proceedings. Early on the following Monday morning I eluded the vigilance of my too solicitous friends, and, having secured what money I could, as well as a beltful of pistols and other small arms, I mounted old Daniel and took my departure.

Where the road from Molebsk joined the direct road to Viatka, I took refuge from the cold and boisterous weather in the hut of a peasant, whence I could keep a watch upon all that passed

without; and from my watching-place I espied, an hour or two later, a small cavalcade approaching. This was Krilof's three-horsed travelling carriage placed upon sledge runners, and occupied by Vera and her brother and the nurse, followed by an ordinary rustic sledge drawn by two horses and containing servants, while a third vehicle was loaded with baggage and provisions.

I had left old Daniel to munch his oats in full view of any passers-by, because I knew that he would not escape my Vera's eyes—few things ever did!—and I desired her to know that I was at hand. That she did see Daniel, and also understood the meaning of his presence there, was made clear to me by the waving of a white handkerchief from the carriage window. Andrey, too, might have seen and recognised Daniel as easily as she, but Andrey was not sharp enough. Not that it would have made much difference if he had!

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

R. SULLY'S book on children and their psychology is one of the most curious and interesting. As one reads it and reflects on it, long-closed vistas of memory reopen. One looks down the avenues, and sees merely a child at the far end. course our memories of our own childhood are apt to be vitiated in many ways, yet something true may be picked up. religion, surely children are more sceptical and given to reasoning and questioning than of old, or, probably, children differ in these as in all matters. I cannot remember doubting anything that I was told, or reasoning in any way, for instance, about God. 'Mr. C- is in the room,' said a little girl, speaking of a man who was dead. Her syllogism was, 'Mr. C--- is with God: God is everywhere, therefore in this room; Mr. C--- is where God is, therefore Mr. C--- is in this room.' Is this kind of logic common, or was the child as precocious as Pascal? Beyond a strong opinion that I should be 'a goat' at the Last Day, I can remember no religious speculations of my own, and the Last Day seemed a long way off. The idea of the Deity made little impression; the Shorter Catechism, which had to be learned by heart, seemed meaningless, and did not even excite curiosity. Yet Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Minto understood the Catechism in childhood, and (as they informed me) were appalled by its doctrines, whatever they may be. I do remember thinking that the Angels who made love to the daughters of men were the gods-Apollo and Zeus and Hermes—under other names. One's infant reason was mythological, not theological, in bias. Also, I do remember being on the side of the Tarquins in The Lays of Ancient Rome, regarding them as Jacobites, and Titus Tarquin as a very fine fellow. was consistent, at least.

If theology made no appeal to me, the doctrine of ghosts did, and I went in fear of the Mauth Dog and of the Goblin Page, while

indifferent about predestination. On the moral side, cruelty made me ill, and I skipped the passage where they roast the commendator of Crosraguel in the Tales of a Grandfather. I could hardly persuade myself to kill a trout, and even now I would as lief restore him to the water. I saw cruelty practised by other children with horror. They did not grow up into little Neros, though they were certainly little Red Indians in character at the time. Children seem to vary between instinctive cruelty to flies. frogs, mice, and extreme tenderness of heart, yet they may be born of the same parents, and, when adult, may be neither better nor worse than their neighbours. One will be a little curmudgeon, another as lavish as a Red Indian, both grow up with an ordinary measure of generosity. One child may be ill with grief on a certain occasion when his brother admits that he 'does not care a bawbee.' But all these extremes of character tone down into the commonplace in a few years. Of imagination-the power of 'playing at things,' and summoning 'invisible playmates'-I am sure that I never had an ounce after I learned to read. From that remote hour I let authors do my imagining for me, while I saw less bookish children living in fantasy, in a world of dreams.

The power of 'visualising' cannot be given; it is born with some children, not with others. Scott and George Sand had it in great abundance. It is not in Lockhart, I think, but in an unpublished letter, that a lady who knew Scott as a child describes his talk of his 'visions;' and George Sand, we know, had, as a child, the gift of crystal-vision: not in a crystal. 'Images arose before me, and established themselves on the green fire-screen. There were woods, fields, rivers, towns of a strange gigantesque architecture, enchanted palaces, impossible gardens, myriads of birds, golden, purple, and azure; there were green, black, violet, and, above all, blue roses. . . . One day the appearances became so perfect that I asked my mother if she did not see them.' George could see these marvels nowhere but on the screen: in fact she was a 'scryer.'

These peculiarities of childhood may or may not survive into mature life. Of the people known to me who can see visions in crystals, one is an eminently imaginative author, one an historian; others, even when they engage in literature, do not write fiction.

One was devoted to an invisible playmate, who did not always come at call. The most typically imaginative child whom I ever knew now reads Horace and Scott a great deal, but never writes. I think these visions, as in crystal, seen by children or adults are as interesting as 'coloured hearing,' about which Mr. Sully says a good deal, while he seems rather to neglect the ocular phantasmata. Of course, to make purposeful experiments in the visionary powers of children is rather dangerous in various ways. A child, I fear, is apt to 'play it upon' the inquirer, and experiment needs much tact, for questions are wont to suggest answers. When I was about sixteen I read De Quincey's Autobiography, and was struck by his account of his childish visions. Happening to be in the company of a little boy of seven, I said, 'Fred, did you ever see anything on the wall?' The child eagerly described the very experiences of De Quincey, and, clever as he certainly was, I do not think he was plagiarising from that author. I gave him no hint of what he was expected to say. A little later he became something of a somnambulist, as many children do who outgrow that interesting but uncomfortable tendency. I cannot help thinking that the scientific study of childhood is only in its infancy, and may yet tell us much about our souls, or selves. Mr. Sully seems hardly to have made the most of his theme: for instance, the amazing differences among children perhaps deserve more attention.

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That children as a rule run rapidly through the savage intellectual stage is probable enough, but all children do not present the savage phenomena. For one, I was born civilised, with a perfect horror of cruelty (so natural to many infants), and with no power of personifying inanimate things, or of 'visualising,' or of living in fantasy. All these tendencies go to make, or to indicate, genius; men of genius retain them in mature life; but the majority of children who visualise, personify, and live in fantasy, lose these qualities at school. They trail their clouds of glory no further than the Lower Fourth. On one aspect of the child-savage Mr. Sully writes fully-on the beginnings of the art of design. It is certain that some savage races, notably the Red Indians, draw much as children usually draw. They indicate things which they know exist, but which are not visible at the moment represented. Thus we find both eyes given in profile, while, in full face, the mouth (by children and Australian cave-wall painters) is often

not indicated at all. When the mouth is given the teeth are often displayed, not because they are visible, or visualised, but because they are known to be there. Both legs of a man on horseback are often given, though one is out of view. But children, among themselves, vary as much in skill as the bushmen or etchers on mastodon ivory differ from the Red Indians. John Millais, or Landseer, at four drew well, and not as children in general do-like low savages. If we could explain this, we might solve the mystery of genius in individuals and in gifted Mr. Sully, unless I read him carelessly, neglects the influence of nursery tradition in art. My venerated nurse had a traditional geometrical pattern of a cat, which, of course, we all copied. Other children had other traditional patterns, remembered, not invented, by them. Indeed, I conceive that most children in drawing do not copy a mental image or a real modelthey follow tradition; they are members of a school much older than that of Phidias.

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Among the lowest human races there are great differences of endowment. The Australian black is a decorative artist-the herring-bone and other early patterns are incised over his shield; he almost never attempts to draw the human form. But I have here a paper book, full of drawings in ink by a black of Corowa, in New South Wales. The artist cannot read or write, and in design is quite self-taught. He is, if still alive, a man of fifty. He opens with a purely decorative rose in blue ink. Then we have a corroboree of blacks armed with boomerangs. Their bodies are painted in patterns, white on black. Next, a scene of European life. A lady with ringlets and in crinoline offers a flower to a gentleman in a tall hat. Others, several in riding costume, walk about with a perfect rendering of swagger. Then a black fellow, holding a bush in front of him, and armed with a spear, stalks kangaroos and emus. The beasts and birds are worthy of a bushman-painter of cave-walls. The trees are, literally, in the style of the Italian 'Primitives.' Then we have duels: waddys, and shields, and boomerangs are the weapons. There is, next, an admirable ambush-blacks leap out with a forest of spears; the enemy run away. A very spirited design represents blacks, with spears and throwing-sticks, pursuing kangaroos. The action of throwing the spear with the throwing-stick is given with spirit and accuracy. Presently we are in a forest; a black lubra, her child on her back, follows her husband. That sportsman stalks iguanas climbing a tree, opossums up a dead tree, and some emus. Next, men in a canoe spear fish; a tall black in a cloak is running at full speed, carrying over his shoulder two big fish on a spear. A black throws a tomahawk at a 'possum up a gum-tree. All these are designed in a book, on the cover of which is a sketch of the Elgin marbles. The black artist is probably no unusual example of skill in his rather lowly race. The swagger of his white 'bounders' is his highest achievement in humour. The drawings were made in 1886. Probably the man had seen illustrated newspapers, but his style is all his own. He is fond of trees, but never introduces hills or other features of landscape.

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Talking of Australians reminds me to divulge what I hope is no very dead secret. Mrs. Parker, who knows the blacks well, has collected their popular tales in her own district. These make a regular natural 'Jungle Book,' by a variety of savage Kiplings, including the King of the Hippi. To say nothing of their interest as folk-lore (which only bores the public), they are fine, fascinating stories, the very things that children like. One elderly child read all through them with pleasure on a hot day under a tree. Let parents and guardians, then, attend to this deliberate puff preliminary, and look out for Mrs. Parker's Australian Legendary Tales, which are to be published by Mr. Nutt. The name should not frighten people away (I don't mean Mr. Nutt's name, but 'Legendary Tales'), for they are quite safe to charm any child worth charming. The 'Golliwogg' is not in it with the Goomblegubbon, and the Piggiebillah, and the other Australian beasts and birds. Really, the stories are not unworthy in some ways of him who created Rikki Tikki. It would be a real pity if we pedantic old folk-lorists kept all the fun to ourselves.

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Trout do not take Bloody Marys. This statement may seem enigmatic, and needs explaining. Sir Herbert Maxwell has an heretical opinion that trout do not distinguish colour. Therefore Mr. R. B. Marston has sent me some scarlet May-flies which, on the Itchen, he finds that trout refuse. I could not fish with them, because of the Lord's day, when you may angle for coarse fish unrebuked, but not for trout. Accompanied by another philosopher, I carefully dropped the Bloody Marys, or scarlet May-

flies, into a small brook where trout were taking the natural insect. The flies floated, cocked up and quite dry, over plenty of feeding trout, which rise eagerly at a well directed and properly coloured artificial green drake, but not a fish would move at the Bloody Mary. They liked her no more than John Knox liked her namesake. Moreover, trout will not take the grey drake when the green alone is on the water. This seems to settle the question; but that salmon make minute distinctions of colour, as between a Popham and a Childers, I do not believe. We saw a big trout following flitting May-flies about, as they danced in the air, and leaping at them when within reach. Salmon do not rise in that way: they sally up from the deeps to a fly which is only a glittering vibratory object.

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Every one should read Miss F. Skene's interesting reminiscences in the June Blackwood. They are full of most curious matter, and the story of Sir Walter Scott's appearance, long after his death, to Mr. Skene is charmingly told. 'He said he had come from a great distance.' Of course this is not a ghost story, for Mr. Skene was very old, and old age has its illusions. But it is a pretty story, and was very like Sir Walter, and very fortunate for 'the most highly privileged of men,' as Mr. Swinburne calls Mr. Skene. As to Mr. Lockhart, Miss Skene, as far as she may give an impression that he was deserted by, or estranged from, his only daughter, does not convey the real state of the facts. Mr. Lockhart was very much softened (as she says) before his death. He did not prefer his daughter's change of faith, though he did not let it estrange him. He wrote to her constantly, always concealing the extent of his illness, always declining to let her leave Scotland to attend on him, always filling his letters with gay and amusing gossip and tender affection. Old and lonely, weak, heartbroken, in severe pain, his letters were those of a young wit, so eager was he not to let his griefs darken her wedded happiness, so determined he was to bear his burden alone. It seems right to say this, as Miss Skene's brief interview with him and report of what he said (correct, no doubt, as far as it goes) might be misunderstood. For the rest, her remarks entirely confirm the impression made by the letters of this silent, and truehearted, and melancholy man. One cannot but hope that Miss Skene may add to her recollections of interesting people, from Sir Walter to Mr. Jowett.

Some one remarks on the cohesiveness of fads. A friend of Anglo-Israel will lean to vegetarianism, the flatness of the earth, bimetallism, the allegorical interpretation of Dante, unfulfilled prophecy, and rational dress, falsely so called. Yet a White Rose League person is rarely a Psychical Researcher, and never an Anglo-Israelite, a flat-earth man, a bimetallist, a Dr. Jimist, or a rational dresser. To my knowledge, only two sweet enthusiasts combine a craze for spooks with a passion for the White The reason appears to be that the two latter fads are adopted to annoy other people—scientific persons and Philistines -rather than for their own merits. But there may be faddists who wear their white roses and astral lights with a difference, and are professional anti-vivisectionists into the bargain, and devotees of female suffrage. These we may legitimately distrust in questions of evidence.

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People interested in evidence may concern themselves with what has been occurring, perhaps is occurring still, at Tilley, near Caen. A respectable minority of the populace is seeing apparitions of Our Lady, and the rest are going to see them see her. A gamekeeper, a devout man, and a free-thinking ironmonger, and a countess are among the witnesses. The apparitions float up from below (not 'a good airt'), and often first an arm appears, then a shoulder, a neck, a head, and so the whole figure. The appearances differ in details in the experience of different spectators. If we do not suppose that everybody concerned is fabling, we must at least admit that 'there are visions about.' Church, so far, takes an unfavourable sense of these appearances; partly because nothing comes of them, and no meaning can be extracted from them. The affair is very mediæval and unaccountable, because, in England at least, the sort of imagination which can 'objectify' its creations is most unusual. It seems to be pretty common in the rural district of Tilley.

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Of all quaint writing or hieroglyphs, that of Easter Island is the oddest. An American archæological journal gives examples copied from the wooden tablets of Easter Island. The figures are neatly incised in wood, and represent, conventionally, men, women, and beasts in many various attitudes. If the top line shows them right side up, the second line 'inverts them, and has

to be read by turning the tablet; while to read the third line you must bring the manuscript into the original position, and so on. This is a new kind of *Boustrophedon*, as in early Greek inscriptions. Probably the documents of Easter Island will never be deciphered; certainly they look as systematic, and nearly as artistic, as the hieroglyphs on an Egyptian papyrus.

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It was always known at St. Andrews that Mr. Tait could do it, and had a better game in him than anybody else. Now, at Sandwich, he has done it—won the amateur championship, and broken (as also at St. Andrews) the record of the links. This is encouraging, and probably he will 'pit the open championship in his pouch.' Every one was glad to see Mr. Horace Hutchinson in his old form again, and close up to the winner. Scotland, I think, has now won the amateur championship thrice running, and Taylor must look to his laurels.

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'Dorians may talk Doric,' according to Praxinoë and Gorgo, but, according to a certain kind of reviewer, Scotch novelists should not write Scotch. The remarks of the critic of Mr. Stevenson's Weir of Hermiston in the Athenœum are typical. Long ago the Quarterly Review discovered that Guy Mannering was couched in 'a darkened dialect of Anglified Erse'—'the language of Ossian,' as a recent newspaper philologist has it. 'We can scarcely have half the book before us,' says the Athenœum about Weir, 'yet already the glossary, which is eminently necessary, deals with over a couple of hundred words. Lord Hermiston objects to "palmering about in bauchles." He talks a little "sculduddery" after dinner. We have "ettercaps" and "carlines," scraps of Scot's "ballants," and, in short, the book is not for the Southron.'

This is either gross ignorance or puerile affectation. The Scotch Ballads, the Waverley Novels, and Burns's poems are familiar to every Englishman with the slightest pretensions to literature. The words—the two hundred Scotch words used by

the Ballads. If this reviewer really does not understand them, he cannot read, without a glossary, books with which every edu-

Mr. Stevenson-are of constant occurrence in Burns, Scott, and

cated man is supposed to be familiar. The words themselves, as a rule, are old English surviving north of the Tweed. ought to be enough of a philologist to comprehend them, especially by aid of the context. When we are told that a coarse, sensual humorist talks 'sculduddery' after dinner, we must be idiots if we fail to understand the nature of his conversation. 'bold bawdry,' as Ascham calls it. There are scarcely any Celtic words in Scotch; the terms are old English, with a few corruptions of French. A person who does not understand most of the peculiar terms is more dull and ignorant than a critic should like to write himself down, or to write his reading fellow-countrymen down. It is ridiculous to pretend, in the face of facts, that educated 'Southrons' do not read and appreciate Scott, Burns, and the Ballads. All of these circulate, and for eighty years have circulated, very widely, south of the Tweed. People do not buy millions of copies of books which they cannot read with ease. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Mr. Barrie's and of Mr. Crockett's novels have been bought in England. These books are full of the Scots, and it is plain that they are understood; if not, they would not be so popular. .

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One cannot suppose that the Athenœum's censor is really puzzled, either by 'sculduddery' or by 'bauchles.' If he really is puzzled, he must be excessively unread and inordinately dull. He must, therefore, be posing, and, if so, for what gallery? Certainly not for the largest English novel-reading public, for that is the public of Burns, Scott, Mr. Barrie, Mr. Crockett, and Mr. Stevenson. No works of old fiction have the circulation of Sir Walter's; no new novels, as far as anybody can judge, are more largely read than those of the authors of Kidnapped, A Window in Thrums, and The Raiders. Assuredly the English are the chief purchasers. They are not ignorant and stupid enough to be puzzled by some few hundred words constantly recurring in fiction and poetry ever since the days of Burns, Hogg, and Scott. Nobody seems to be perplexed but learned newspaper critics. It is, perhaps, less unkind to regard them as affected than as really much more stupid than the novel-reading public at large. they put on this particular affectation, and strike this especial pose in the Athenaum and elsewhere, is a mystery. Probably it is a survival of that English superiority which, long ago, spoke of Scotch as 'Anglified Erse,' and to-day thinks that Ossian sang in

Lowland Scotch. This would certainly be very superior ignorance, if it were genuine, and would indicate a real genius for not knowing things. Such stupidity is rare, and is confined to reviewers, if it exists at all. On the whole, one prefers to believe that the Athenœum gentleman is not so obtuse as he takes a mistaken pride in appearing. It is rather his sense of humour that is antiquated than his education that is neglected. Now reviewers really need not affect ignorance: they have such quantities of the genuine article. However, if they will insist on averring that they review Scotch novels in ignorance of Scotch, Latin essays in ignorance of Latin, and translations from Greek in ignorance of Greek, we can only say that it is time for them to receive the homely compliment of the sack. There must, surely, be qualified men who would do the work; if not, the pretence of doing the work had better be dropped altogether.

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I ought to have explained that Praxinoë and Gorgo are Syracusan, Doric-speaking women in an idyll of Theocritus, a Greek poet. They do not hail from the Saut-market. Saut is Scotch for salt, and the 'Saut-market' is referred to by a character in a 'Kailyard novel' named Rob Roy, by one Walter Scott, who died in 1832, or, according to Professor Goldwin Smith, in 1836. Professor Goldwin Smith makes this assertion in his Life of Scott, but it is unsupported by contemporary evidence.

ANDREW LANG.

